New Statesman

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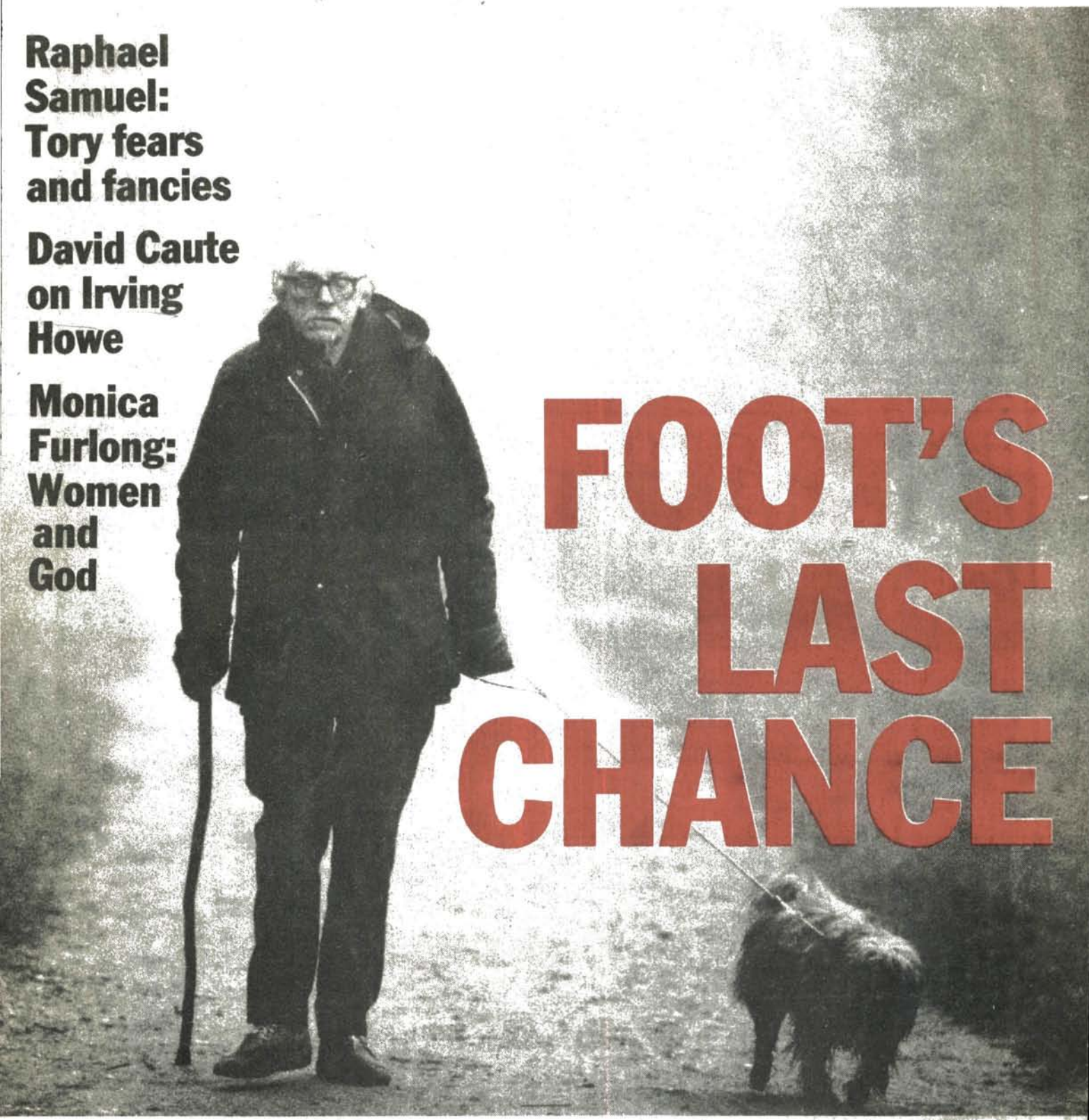
Raphael Samuel: Tory fears and fancies

David Caute on Irving Howe

Monica Furlong: Women and God



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New Statesman Vol 105 No 2711 4 March 1983

Foot slogging

A WEEK – as the only Labour Prime Minister ever to leave office voluntarily once said – is a long time in politics. A week ago it seemed that Michael Foot was on the skids and out of control, while we were all trying to clear our heads after the Bermondsey earthquake. This week Michael Foot is (with the help of a long television interview) back in firm charge, sustained by public declarations of loyalty from all sections of his party. If Labour can put up a half-way decent showing in the Darlington by-election at the end of the month, the supposed Foot leadership crisis will be over. So what has changed? The answer is not very much.

The Bermondsey result told us a lot about the state of politics in Bermondsey. But it told us very little that we did not know about the state of politics nationally, except perhaps to underline in the clearest way the extraordinarily volatile state of the electorate today. Tactical cross-voting in favour of the Liberal by those whose initial intention was to support either the Tory or the breakaway local Tammany Hall candidate was on a scale unprecendented in modern British politics. During the course of last year, Michael Foot got himself into some undignified and unnecessary positions in his efforts to stop Bob Mellish resigning to force this by-election. There is at least sour comfort in the fact that the roof fell in on Mellish as well.

But if the catastrophic result at Bermondsey is no real guide to the state of the parties, the same will be true of a good result for Labour in Darlington. It is quite likely at this stage to be a 'good' result. The fact that Foot has made it into a personal vote of confidence (and the media attention that the local campaign is certain to get) will work this time in favour of the official Labour candidate. But even a good result will not change Labour's fundamental crisis.

That crisis is a compound of now familiar elements. A party cannot spend five years engaged in a bitter civil war and retain electoral credibility. Most of the political energy and tactical concerns of party activists since this government came to office have been concentrated on internal power struggles, not principles or policies. The process is continuing even now. Left wingers are springing forward, proffering and demanding loyalty oaths to the leader, not primarily because they think it will improve the party's chances at the election, but in order to block a 'draft Healey' move. Right wingers declare their steady support for Foot not because they privately think that he is a good leader, but because to do otherwise would spoil any last chance of their man becoming leader.

Of course, the 'capitalist press' and the rest of the media have had a field day of it all. No question, there exists a bias there against Labour – most obviously in the national press, but also in TV's news and current affairs. There always has been. It is not satisfactory. But it has not in the past prevented the election of Labour governments. The reason why the media are now concentrating on Labour's internal problems, and on its personalities rather than its policies, is that this is precisely what the Labour movement itself has been doing ever since the last election.

For some, the prospect of a smaller but purer Labour Party going into semi-permanent opposition at Westminster – relieved of the necessity to compromise in the hope of office and able to develop socialist ideas, or work for socialism outside Parliament – is an acceptable, even a welcome idea. In the face of the threat of a second full term for the present government, this attitude is one of gross irresponsiblity. Almost anything would be better than that for this country.

FOR THE THATCHER counter-revolution has been gathering pace steadily. Her claim from the start was that she needed two full terms for her purposes. In the first term, the major damage has been from the blind and stubborn application of an economic policy, designed to test British industry to destruction. So far most of the ideas for dismantling the welfare state, for reducing the rights of those least advantaged in our society, for backtracking on civil liberties, for further attacks on the trade union movement have only been put forward as ideas for discussion.

But there should be no doubting Mrs Thatcher's fundamentally anti-libertarian attitudes, or her determination. She is gathering to herself academic and social support of a kind that until now only hung around the fringes of the Tory Party. Much of it is openly fascist in its tendencies. The Labour Party has a political duty to do everything in its power to stop the second phase of this counter-revolution taking place. Today it is not convincingly placed for the task.

The responsibility for this cannot be placed at Michael Foot's door. The Labour Party was at war with itself long before he became leader and many of the events of the past years would have taken place whoever had been in his position. But he must bear a share of the blame. The Labour Party has at the best of times been a difficult party to lead, particularly in opposition. Leadership of an open and democratic party is a great deal more difficult than leading, say, the Tory Party.

Even so Michael Foot has not been effective within the party. His style and rhetoric have an old-fashioned quality, ill-suited to the unavoidable needs of politics in the television age. If his going now as leader would help the situation, then it would be his clear duty to go. There is, however, no evidence that his resignation would help Labour at all. To plunge the party into an inevitably prolonged leadership struggle in the run up to the election would be damaging. To allow Denis Healey to serve as acting leader until an election, without being endorsed by the party would be equally damaging. There is no evidence that a Healey leadership would be able in the period between now and an election to heal the party's wounds and make it into a more effective political force – rather the reverse. In the present volatile state of politics, the balance of this judgement could still change. If it did, Michael Foot should not allow injured pride or stubborness to stop him stepping aside – not just in the best interests of the party, but the country. On all available evidence, however, his present duty is to lead Labour into the next election. □

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Changes demanded in Birmingham Labour Party

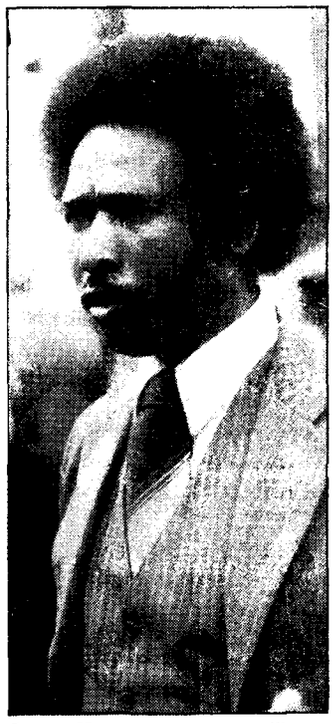
TWO ASIAN men who were expelled from the Labour Party in Birmingham are to be readmitted immediately and a third is to be free to re-apply after a year's suspension. The recommendations are made by an organisation sub-committee of the National Executive Council, whose report on the state of the Handsworth Labour Party was accepted by the NEC on 23 February. The regional office is to review the membership of Handsworth branch over the next six months.

Paul Upal and Sarwan Atwell were initially expelled because they had supported Mushtaq Rabbani, the third man, as an independent candidate in the 1982 local elections. But the men claimed that they had been victimised for speaking out about the 'mafia-style' organisation of the branch. They claim that important meetings have been packed with people from outside the area and with people who have had their membership fees paid for them. The running of the branch has been the subject of a number of complaints over the last two years, including allegations of racism, intimidation and violence.

Chairman of Handsworth Ward Labour Party is James Hunte, a black West Midlands County Councillor and a flamboyant community entrepreneur. Controversy has dogged his careers as both a politician and a black leader. In 1977, while a member of the Labour Party, Hunte stood as an independent candidate in the Ladywood parliamentary by-election claiming that the party was not opposing racialism strongly enough.

He survived a vote to expel him from the party and worked to re-establish himself in the Handsworth branch. In the autumn of 1980, however, the extraordinary number of membership applications being received by the branch prompted Peter Tinsley, the election agent for Handsworth's Labour MP Sheila Wright, to carry out a check. He found that about a quarter of the 100 or so names put forward were not on the electoral register, and no-one answering to those names could be found at the given addresses.

Peter Tinsley referred the matter to the Handsworth constituency. But he received no support from the branch executives. The constituency chairman, right-winger Norman Hargreaves, says he did not take the complaints further because Tinsley lacked the evidence. 'Peter Tinsley was a newcomer to the area. He didn't understand that a ward like this one has a lot of movement,' said Hargreaves.



Birmingham Post & Mail

James Hunte: county councillor at centre of West Midlands charge and counter-charge

James Hunte claims that he was asked to recruit West Indians by Sheila Wright and other left-wingers who wanted to oust *Militant*, which had taken over the branch in 1979. But the alliance which did defeat Militant was in the end between the white Right and the black Hunte supporters. Hunte was made chairman of the branch, and constituency membership secretary, his wife Sharon Hunte became branch membership secretary, and Hargreaves became constituency chairman.

One of the people whose membership was questioned at the time is Saeed Abdi. His address on the electoral register was in Sparkbrook on the other side of the city. In 1980 Abdi's name appeared on the electoral register in both Handsworth and Sparkbrook, qualifying him for membership of the Handsworth branch. His address on the register was given as 140 Leonard Road – the same address as James Hunte. Saeed Abdi has been named in two statements as the person who asked people to attend branch meetings where party elections were taking place even though they had paid no membership fee to join the Labour Party. In February 1982, Mushtaq Rabbani, whose expulsion was rescinded in favour of suspension, complained to the Perry Bar police station that he had been kicked and threatened by Saeed Abdi. Police investigated the complaint but no action followed. It was Rabbani who stood as an independent in the 1982 local election on a 'clean up the Labour Party platform.' Saeed Abdi refused to comment when contacted at his Sparkbrook address.

Although there is little doubt that the Labour Party should do much more to combat racism, there have been many complaints about Hunte's methods of getting support. Phil Rose, a Nalgo official, says Hunte threatened him with violence during a disagreement at a constituency meeting two months ago. David Benny, a 'moderate' county councillor, witnessed this incident and says that he had also been abused by Hunte and called a fascist when he disagreed with him. Hunte admits he did 'call Rose a racist and a bastard and something more' and that he would 'cut his arse'; but he had said it to his face and meant nothing by it. Rose also says he was threatened by Hunte two years ago when he opposed the selection of Rudi Narayan (now in the SDP) to replace Sheila Wright. Rose says he was visited by some men the next day, which terrified his wife, though nothing happened.

The Labour Party inquiry coincided with another major row in the West Midlands over the disbursement of £80,000 to ethnic groups by the county council race relations committee, of which Hunte is vice-chairman. Of the 115 grants given, only 15 groups have sent in reports on how the money was used, though such a report is a condition of the grant award.

Hunte defends the small grants scheme – attacked most strongly by Liberal councillor Paul Tilsley as 'an elaborate rip-off' – as a method of getting youths off the street. Less well-heeled groups find the procedures of applying for grants difficult to deal with, and they were the recipients of some of the grants. However, the county council has now instituted an internal audit on the scheme, to investigate every group that received funds.

The community project which has received the most substantial grant is the Muhammad Ali Community Centre in Hockley. The centre is to be a community amenity – strongly backed by the police – and is being organised by Midland Community Growth and Support Association, whose National Director is James Hunte. £290,000 in capital and £41,000 in revenue has been given by the Inner-City Partnership Scheme. Unusually, a special tranche of money was made available to the project before the general Partnership allocation was carved up into separate budget heads. Thus the money did not come out of the voluntary sector budget or the budget administered by the Society Topic Group which would normally have dealt with it.

In May 1980 Clive Wilkinson, leader of the council, wrote to Tom King, then Minister for Local Government, urging him to approve the extra payment of £150,000 to the centre as quickly as possible. There is nothing improper in any of this. Rather it is testament to the influential position James Hunte now holds in Birmingham's Labour Party decisions. As the white working-class vote becomes increasingly volatile, the support of black voters is going to become increasingly decisive.

Howard Sharron

Summary justice

WITH A SPEED unheard of in British justice, ten peace campers from Upper Heyford were arrested, charged, judged and sentenced on Monday 28 February. To complete their task, Banbury Magistrates, summoned at 3pm, sat until after 8 o'clock in the evening.

The ten – three women and seven men – had coiled themselves round the fence posts at the USAF base at Upper Heyford in an attempt to halt the extension work going on. The base is for F111 nuclear bombers. There has been a peace camp at the site since last October.

The initial charge against the ten was Criminal Damage, but this was quickly changed to a charge of Breach of the Peace. They decided to plead not guilty. Although they had the name of a solicitor, he turned out to be the Banbury prosecutor that day. The duty defence solicitor, Roger Rose, told the court he could not possibly prepare a defence for all ten that afternoon. The magistrates granted an adjournment of one and a half hours. Although the defendants had witnesses for their case – a photographer who had taken pictures, workmen on the site – there was no time to develop the pictures or summon the workmen.

Despairing of his task, Mr Rose said he could not conduct their defence without an adjournment, and the defendants decided to do it themselves. But having cross-examined prosecution witnesses, they still could not get the case adjourned, and finally refused to give any evidence themselves. The magistrates promptly bound them over to keep the peace – which the defendants agreed to do 'in their own terms'. □

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Information on nuclear safety suppressed

IMPORTANT information on nuclear reactor safety was suppressed by the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) in the run-up to the Sizewell B Public Inquiry, now in session in Suffolk. Confidential correspondence leaked to the *New Statesman* reveals that senior UKAEA officials were anxious to hush up the conclusions of an internal report, codenamed SRD R224, which casts doubt on some of the Authority's assumptions on the likelihood of a major nuclear reactor accident.

The unpublished report assessed the possibility that the steel pressure vessel used in the American-style Pressurised Water Reactor (PWR) planned for Sizewell could be subject to catastrophic failure. In such an event there is a grave risk that large quantities of dangerous radioactivity would be released into the environment. Last year the UKAEA published a report by a study group under the then chairman, Dr Walter Marshall, which concluded that the risk of pressure vessel failure was infinitesimal. (Marshall was subsequently knighted and sent to run the Central Electricity Generating Board.) Largely as a result of the report the CEGB have assumed in their evidence to the Sizewell Inquiry that such an accident is 'incredible'.

However, two scientists in the Structural Mechanics Section of the UKAEA's Safety and Reliability Directorate, Mr Irvine and Dr Quirk, seriously questioned the assumptions in the Marshall Report. These are that under favourable conditions very small cracks in the reactor pressure vessel would not be liable to lead to a major rupture as the possibility of cracks spreading would in fact be 'self-limiting' due to certain physical phenomena. Irvine and Quirk's work – contained in the unpublished report SRD R224 – challenged this 'rather surprising assumption' and suggested instead that the stresses imposed would in some circumstances cause very small cracks to grow without stopping, thereby increasing the risk of a disastrous rupture in the pressure vessel.

In February 1982, one of Irvine and Quirk's colleagues Mr I. Johnstone, wrote to Dr John Gittus, director of the UKAEA PWR safety research programme, summarising Irvine and Quirk's reservations. He suggested that Gittus meet Irvine and Quirk to discuss the matter. Dr Gittus was one of last week's expert witnesses at the Sizewell Inquiry.

In response Johnstone received a curt note dated 24 February 1982 from John G. Collier, the head of the Safety and Reliability Directorate. Collier wrote that Dr Gittus would find it 'confusing' to receive advice from the Directorate which 'to a degree is at variance' with the findings of the Marshall Report. He concluded that

> given the limited time (Dr Gittus) has available to prepare himself, whilst it may be appropriate for him to be aware of the range of views on these topics held in the Authority, I am not sure it would be helpful to pursue the matter further.

When Dr Gittus appeared at the Sizewell Inquiry last week he made no reference to the work of Irvine and Quirk.

William Cannell, the nuclear hazards researcher for Friends of the Earth Trust, said that the information which appeared to have been suppressed was important as it markedly reduced the conservatism of the CEGB's assumptions on reactor safety. He added: 'It is a pity that the UKAEA should restrict their evidence to one official view rather than allow a range of views to be expressed.'

Rob Edwards

Tarmac siege

A DELEGATION of Midlands trade unionists handed in a letter of protest last Friday to a board meeting of Tarmac Construction Company, protesting about Tarmac's contract to build the siloes for cruise missiles at Greenham Common. The contract is worth £11½ million.

The unions, led by UCATT and supported by representatives from the county council, NUPE and the T&GWU, asked to address the board meeting. They were not surprised to be turned down by John Baxter, the manager of Tarmac's Manpower Services section, who left the meeting to accept their letter – in part out of alarm at the 100 demonstrators who were 'besieging' their headquarters. Workers from direct works sites at Wolverhampton, Coventry, Sandwell and Birmingham turned up to support the protest.

A spokesman for UCATT said yesterday that they hoped the county council in future refuse to give contracts to Tarmac. Tarmac directors say it is 'unfair' that they, out of all the contrators at Greenham Common, have been picked on. They say that it is 'not appropriate for directors to attempt to make judgments in the political field'.

Sarah Benton

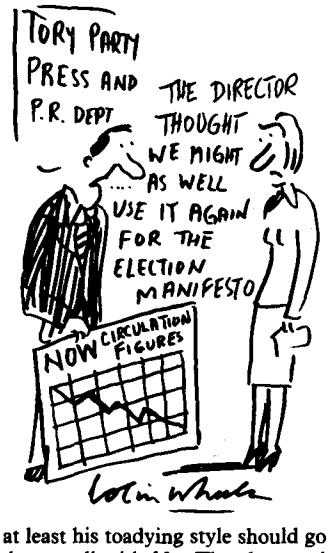
MISCELLANY

Quids in

Margaret Thatcher promised to recreate the entrepreneurial spirit in Britain, and you have to admit that she's been as good as her word. Take the case of Sir John Austin Hungerford Leigh Hoskyns (to give him his full handle), the businessman who headed Mrs T's policy unit from 1979 until last summer. Since his departure from Downing Street he has had a rather agreeable job as 'personal adviser' to transport secretary David Howell. Hoskyns is paid a salary of £4,500 in return for which he has to work a gruelling *three days a month*. What does he do on these days to make himself so valuable? 'He is available to Mr Howell at all times for advice', according to the Department of Transport. Yes, but what sort of advice? The Department hasn't a clue. What was that about people pricing themselves out of jobs?

On bended knee

You have to admire the Tories for their courage in hiring Anthony Shrimsley as their director of press and public relations: the last two ventures with which he was associated – *Now!* magazine and the *Mail on Sunday* – did not exactly flourish under his tender care. Still,


TORY PARTY PRESS AND P.R. DEPT
THE DIRECTOR THOUGHT WE MIGHT AS WELL USE IT AGAIN FOR THE ELECTION MANIFESTO
NOW CIRCULATION FIGURES

at least his toadying style should go down well with Mrs Thatcher, and should make his transformation from reporter to propagandist fairly easy. Shrimsley's fearless approach to journalism is well illustrated by the opening question he put to Richard Nixon when intervewing the old crook for *Now!* in 1980: 'In the last four years or so, there seems to have grown up a feeling, certainly in Britain, that the West and particularly the United States does not have quite the same grip on international events as it did when Richard Nixon was in the White House. Now how do you react to that?' No prizes for guessing Nixon's reaction.

Heading north

Tony Benn's Scottish jaunt last weekend was followed by a number of misleading newspaper reports saying that he had abandoned all interest in standing for Livingston, the new constituency which is to be formed from parts of Midlothian and East Lothian. In fact, at a private meeting with about two dozen of his Scottish supporters, he made it clear that although he would allow his name to go forward for the new Bristol seats, he would also like to retain links with Livingston. Certainly Benn's unofficial 'campaign committee' in the area has no intention of dissolving itself just yet. It's worth noting that the main spokesperson for the 'draft Benn' lobby, one Bill Gilbey, doesn't actually live in the new constituency. It's also worth pointing out that the Livingston Constituency Labour Party has not yet been formed: it therefore has the impressive distinction of being racked with internal feuds before it even exists.

Battle of Hastings

John Pilger's television documentary, *The Truth Game*, was finally transmitted this week. The IBA had originally banned it because Pilger's attitude to the Bomb was 'unbalanced', but they then agreed that it could be shown on condition that a 'balancing' (i.e. pro-Bomb) programme was also made. Central TV began a search for someone to make such a film. Professor Michael Howard, Professor Lawrence Freedman and other defence experts were approached, but all of them sensibly declined the poisoned chalice. Eventually Max Hastings, the war reporter who recaptured Fort Stanley single-handed, accepted the commission. His programme will be shown in eight weeks' time. If Max can pull it off, he may even find his way into the New Year Honours List, from which he was so cruelly excluded last time.

Paper Tiger

Desperation is setting in at *The Democrat*, the mould-breakers' mag which was launched last autumn. A couple of months ago it amalgamated with *Alliance*, another mould-breaking mag, and became a monthly instead of a fortnightly. Now the paper's contributors are beginning to grumble that they are no longer being paid. A decision on the paper's future is expected soon. Watch this space.

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Farm workers in the dark

NEWS OF THE 45 per cent increase in farm incomes in 1982 – on top of a 24 per cent increase the year before would 'prove a major public relations problem' for the National Farmers Union, predicted Sir Richard Butler, chief farm baron, last November. He was addressing the NFU ruling council and had already been apprised by helpful Ministry of Agriculture officials of the White Paper figures on farm incomes, released to the rest of the world two weeks ago.

At the time, the NFU was busy negotiating farm workers' wages. It might have been very useful for the workers' side (represented for the first time by the Transport and General Workers' union after last year's merger) to have also been informed of the figures on farmers' incomes. No one at the Ministry or NFU sees any impropriety in this one-sided data service arrangement.

The farmworkers were awarded a parsimonious seven per cent, which came into effect on 20 January. Presiding over the Agricultural Wages Board, which made the award, is the new chairman, Professor Gordon Dickson from Newcastle University. Despite the paltry wage increase, Dickson could be the best thing for farm workers' pay since wages became mandatory, prior to which some farmers regarded them as a luxury. Dickson was widely quoted recently as saying that low farm wages were 'a slur on the industry'.

Farm workers still earn on average over £30 a week less than the average industrial wage. Half of them last year earned less than £2 an hour – the largest proportion of low-paid workers in any industry group. More farm workers – one in five – claim Family Income Supplement than any other occupational group. This continuing poverty (and hidden State subsidy to wages) is despite the much lauded continuous productivity increase in farming, for which farmworkers must take much of the credit. Today many farm workers are highly skilled operatives, using computers in the dairy parlour and massively expensive farm machinery and vehicles outside it.

In fact, the true figures for the wage increase is nearer 5½ per cent than 7, because rates payable to apprentices were not increased. This was an attempt to encourage farmers to be less enthusiastic users of the Youth Opportunities Programme which provides them with even cheaper labour in the fields.

But let's be fair. Farm workers do get perks. The Department of Employment Gazette recently showed that on average farm workers get a weekly milk and potato perk worth 10p. (Some don't get it at all; for those who do it's worth 47p a week.) The Agricultural Wages Board meets next on 21 March to discuss an urgent demand from the T&GWU to reopen the wage talks. As the farmers can patently afford it, what will they say now?

Barry Wilson

Pollsters fall out

WHO IS REALLY ahead in Darlington? Two opinion polls, both conducted last Saturday, produced very different figures. NOP's survey for the *Mail on Sunday* found: SDP 38 per cent, Con 37, Lab 25. MORI's survey for the London *Standard* found: Lab 38, Con 32, SDP 30. The 13 point difference in the Labour share must set some sort of record for two polls conducted in the same place at the same time.

There are three reasons why both polls are liable to a greater than usual margin of error. Both were conducted at very short notice. Both were based on small sample sizes – around 500, when 'don't knows' are excluded. And both suffered the standard handicap that attends local surveys: it is much harder to obtain an accurate sample of the electorate than with national surveys. This is because the government does massive, regular research into the *National* characteristics of the British population – reinforced by findings from market research companies themselves. Accurate, up-to-date figures are available on the British, by age, sex, class, trade union membership, telephone ownership, and so on.

Local information, however, is less complete and less up-to-date. It is therefore harder for pollsters to check the demographic quality of their samples in by-election surveys. The best information about Darlington (as about other seats) comes from the 1981 census, so it is two years old. MORI went further than NOP in making sure its sample corresponded with this census data – not only for the constituency as a whole, but ward-by-ward. Moreover, MORI made sure the distribution of its sample throughout Darlington matched the 1983 electoral register. NOP did not build in these checks.

Normally these technical differences would make little difference to the outcome; but on this occasion NOP seems to have been unlucky. Both MORI and NOP asked respondents who they had voted for in 1979. Whereas a small majority of MORI's sample recalled voting Labour – roughly in line with the actual 1979 result – NOP's sample produced a nine-point Tory lead on the recall question.

Peter Kellner

Rush to stop mass eviction

HOUSING MINISTER George Young is to put pressure on Rowton Hotels to stop them evicting the 2,200 residents of three London hostels – Arlington House, Tower House and Rowton House. If Rowtons carry out their threat to sell the three hostels to a mystery buyer, the residents will have to leave within eight weeks.

The minister agreed to step in following the collapse of negotiations whereby the Greater London Council and the three borough councils affected were trying to buy the hostels themselves. Rowton Hotels turned down the councils' combined offer of £2.4 million and announced that an unnamed private buyer had made a better offer.

Tony McBrearty, who chairs the GLC's housing committee, says that since then Rowtons have rejected several offers to compromise or have the matter settled by an independent arbitrator. If the residents are evicted, the three boroughs – Camden, Lambeth and Tower Hamlets – will suddenly have an extra 2,200 homeless men on their hands.

Residents at the hostels pay Rowtons £14 a week for a cubicle of 34 square feet. In 1981 the firm made £280,000 profit out of Arlington House alone – and spent just £300 on it.

Rowtons first announced their intention of selling the three hostels in September 1982, after Camden Council began to serve improvement notices on Arlington House, under the 1961 Housing Act. Rowtons have made no improvements.

Part of the problem with the cramped, filthy, unsafe hostels has been the inactivity of the councils themselves. Present housing legislation does not *require* local housing authorities to inspect and upgrade 'multiple occupation houses' (bedsits and hostels), it merely *empowers* them to do so (see *NS* 25 Feb).

The Tower House Residents' Association and an East End voluntary organisation called No Fixed Abode are particularly critical of Tower Hamlets Council, which has done nothing to force Rowtons to improve the 700-roomed hovel. Although the council carried out an inspection of Tower House in November, it kept the conclusions of its report strictly confidential and has not acted on them. Yet in January this year, an independent Environmental Health Inspector, Mel Cairns, concluded that the premises were unfit for human habitation, that there was an immediate fire risk and that the council should make a compulsory purchase order as a matter of urgency.

Labour MP Jim Marshall has now introduced a Housing Bill, which received its second reading last week. If it becomes law, residents of hostels will be in a much stronger position to demand higher standards without fear of eviction.

Dorothy Wade

Think tank off the rails

PROFESSOR Alan Walters, the Prime Minister's personal economic adviser, is an influential man. This week his close colleague Anthony Shepard put forward a plan to run minbuses in London in competition with London Transport (see *NS* 25 February).

Walters was instrumental in getting his friend Alfred Goldstein put on the Serpell Enquiry into the Railways. And when Goldstein showed the draft Serpell Report to Walters it was Walters who suggested that Goldstein should write a tougher minority report.

Walters is a key member of the Transport Committee of the Centre for Policy Studies, the Tory 'think tank' that was set up by Sir Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher while they were in opposition. Among the other committee members are Alfred Goldstein, Anthony Shephard and Alfred Sherman. Sherman, a leader writer for the *Daily Telegraph*, holds strong views about British Rail wanting to convert many of their lines into roads.

Walters outlined his own economic views at a private meeting last year held by the Adam Smith Institute (another right-wing outfit). The Secretary of State for Transport, David Howell, also attended the meeting. Walters advocated denationalising British Rail. He said: 'I would love to see many railway lines in private hands – they may do wonders . . . it would be nice to get out of the railways. The real wages you need to pay railway drivers are very low. People would almost pay you to drive a railway train.'

Walters also tacitly acknowledged that he had vetoed British Rail's plans for railway electrification and the Channel Tunnel. He described 'my own office at No. 10' as being a watchdog of the last resort 'looking out for these white elephants who dip their trunks into the trough of public money'. He said that the Think Tank had blocked projects such as railway electrification and the North Sea Oil Pipeline.

He also claimed that a Channel Bridge might make more money than a Channel Tunnel, arguing that the lower rate of return on the capital needed to build a bridge would be acceptable because the country would be spending more money. He held up Chile as his economic model. 'I have examined the process by which investment projects are winnowed in other countries and in my view it is done most effectively in Chile.'

Mick Hamer

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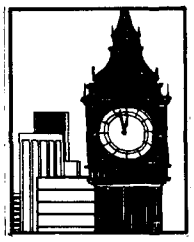

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Why Bermondsey gives Thatcher a tactical headache

IMMEDIATELY after the declaration of last week's Bermondsey by-election result, the media could contemplate little except the leadership of the Labour Party. After Michael Foot's performance on *Weekend World* last Sunday, active speculation has subsided, and is confined for the moment to a handful of political journalists, leader-writers and backbench MPs. Things may well change if Labour loses Darlington; but meanwhile it is worth concentrating not on Mr Foot's problems, which are partly imagined, but on Mrs Thatcher's, which are wholly real.

Three weeks ago I wrote a column suggesting that a June general election was something less than a cast-iron certainty – indeed, that the Prime Minister might slog it right out until next spring. This argument was widely considered eccentric by Those Who Know Better; and for a time, when we had that spate of opinion polls putting the Tories several miles ahead in public popularity, I confess to having harboured the occasional doubt about my prediction.

My confidence is now restored, at least about the no-June-election point. Spectacular by-election swings tend to have little or no long-term effects on national political loyalties; but they do have short-term effects – a short-term that can linger for three to six months:

- A Gallup Poll conducted nationally a few days before the Orpington by-election in March 1962 put the Liberals at 16 per cent. The following month the Liberals' rating rose to 25 per cent, a level it held for two further months before declining gradually to 20 per cent by the autumn.
- In July 1973 the Liberals won two by-elections from the Conservatives. Once again the party's national Gallup rating rose sharply, from 17½ to 28 per cent. The party remained above 20 per cent for four months.
- In 1981 both opinion polls and council by-election results showed surges in Liberal/SDP Alliance support coinciding with Parliamentary by-elections – first Warrington, then Croydon and Crosby. The total effect was to raise the Alliance's pre-Warrington rating of around 25 per cent to a peak in November and December of more than 40 per cent. In early 1982 the Alliance's fortunes gradually declined, but it was not until the summer that the Alliance was back in third place behind Labour.

We can therefore expect a new spurt from the Alliance following Bermondsey. Last weekend's MORI poll in the *Sunday Times*, putting the Alliance at 34 per cent, is likely to prove a temporary peak. (One survey by NOP just after Orpington gave the Liberals a slender national lead over both Labour and the Tories.) But I would expect the regular Gallup and MORI polls conducted during the next few weeks to show the Alliance maintaining a 25 to 30 per cent rating. And for those politicians who profess scepticism towards polls, such figures are likely to be confirmed by the local elections on 5 May.

IT IS INCONCEIVABLE that Thatcher would call a general election in those circumstances. For while she may – rightly or wrongly – expect not to lose any seats to Labour, she could easily see her parliamentary majority extinguished by Alliance gains from the Conservatives.

Bermondsey, to be sure, was a Liberal gain from Labour; but the vast majority of winnable seats for the Alliance are in Tory areas. A straight ten per cent swing from Conservative to Alliance would cost the Tories around 20 seats; a similar swing from Labour to Alliance would cost Labour none.

Alliance tally

Date	Place	LIB vote	LIB %	Result
6/1	**Broadland DC***	396	36.5	LIB gain (Lab)
20/1	**East Devon DC**	634	53.3	LIB gain (Con)
3/2	**Burnley DC***	198	16.1	Lab hold
10/2	**Maidstone DC***	535	45.7	Con hold
17/2	**Crewe DC***	500	45.3	LIB gain (Lab)
17/2	**Crewe DC***	103	8.4	Con hold
17/2	**Gwent CC**	573	29.8	Lab hold
17/2	**Wokingham DC***	635	51.6	LIB hold
24/2	**Brent BC***	469	21.7	Lab hold
24/2	**Essex CC***	835	23.2	Con hold
24/2	**West Sussex CC***	1497	52.8	LIB hold
		SDP vote	**SDP %**	
24/2	**Aberdeen City***	94	11.2	Lab hold
24/2	**Dunfermline DC***	496	33.0	Lab hold

* *Seats also contested by both Con & Lab.*

Local by-elections held in January and February tell a very different story from Bermondsey. Although the Liberals have made two gains from Labour, Labour's vote has generally held up well. Last week Labour's majority in the Harlesden ward of Brent increased by almost 300 – while in a West Sussex County Council election in Worthing, the Liberals' majority over the Conservatives fell by more than half.

But Bermondsey contains a potentially even more worrying message for the Tories. It revealed more than ever before the power of the tactical vote. On the day, it was Peter Tatchell who was crucified by this process; but in a general election it could be the Tories who suffer.

February 1974 provides a pointer to what could happen. In that election the Labour Party did significantly worse than the national average, and the Liberals significantly better, in safe Tory seats. Around 300,000 Labour supporters seem to have switched their votes tactically to the Liberals as the best hope of unseating the local Tory MP*. In the event, only two or three Tory MPs lost their seats directly because of tactical voting; but next time it could be considerably more. If, on top of a general ten per cent Tory-Alliance swing, tactical voting caused half the local Labour vote to switch to the Alliance in safe Tory seats, up to 30 extra Conservative MPs could be in 'tactical' danger. (These calculations are based on the old boundaries; the new boundaries, however, are unlikely to make much difference to the scale of the Tories' problem.)

Mrs Thatcher, then, is certain to wait for the Alliance tide to ebb again before contemplating a general election. This has consequences for those Labour MPs who would like Michael Foot to resign. All past evidence of party leadership changes is that their effects are extremely brief, and certainly more short-lived than Liberal revivals.

In July 1965, with Labour ahead in the polls, tired old Sir Alec Douglas-Home resigned the Conservative leadership, and in came modern, abrasive, meritocratic Edward Heath. Next month the Tories moved ahead of Labour: Tory MPs appeared to have done the right thing by their party. Yet by the month after that, Labour was ahead once more, and remained ahead until the general election the following spring. At that election the Conservatives suffered their worst defeat since 1945.

Equally, when Thatcher succeeded Heath in January 1975, her popularity proved ephemeral. Her approval rating, measured by Gallup, began at 64 per cent, then fell progressively to 35 per cent by June 1975. A year later, when Harold Wilson resigned the Labour leadership, James Callaghan's succession also proved a one-month wonder for Labour.

So new party leaders do enjoy a brief honeymoon; but it soon wears off. If I were a calculating Healey supporter – shrewd or cynical, depending on your point of view – I would take a leaf out of the Australian Labour Party's book and not seek to change the party leadership until the next general election is imminent. And that could still be some time away. □

*See Michael Steed's appendix to *The British General Election of February 1974*, by Butler & Kavanagh; Macmillan.

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LABOUR PARTY

Bermondsey: a lesson in listening

Nicholas Murray, a member of Bermondsey Labour Party, discusses the need for a 'new mould' for Labour strategy and policy at both national and constituency levels

ONE BITTERLY COLD Sunday morning back in November 1981, Southwark-Bermondsey Labour Party gathered in a local church hall to select a prospective parliamentary candidate. As assistant secretary of the CLP, it had been my job to organise the selection – the secretary, Peter Tatchell, was both a candidate and hot favourite to win.

I had instructions from the vicar to clear the hall by six, in time for evensong. After the announcement of the result, comrades were instructed to carry their seats downstairs to the chapel, where all afternoon the frozen candidates had stamped their feet and rubbed their hands to keep warm. John O'Grady, then in his last few months as leader of Southwark Council, gripped one end of a pew and began to toil his way downstairs, with the expression of a man going to Golgotha. Something of that chill, that gloom, has lingered in Bermondsey ever since.

Not that anyone could have forecast then – or, indeed, since – the extent of last Thursday's debacle. No excuses can erase the fact that we failed to win a seat that Labour should never have contemplated *not* winning. Recriminations are pointless, but a clear-sighted assessment of where we go from here is very much to the point. Nowhere is it more necessary than among those of us who have tried in Bermondsey, over the past few years, to coax the Labour Party out of Tammany Hall and into the community.

It is being said that the Liberals found their strength by building a base in the community. Whether or not that is true, we certainly recognised, long ago, the gap that had been opened between the local community and the local Labour establishment – the notorious 'Bermondsey Mafia' whose swan song, on the back of a brewer's dray, we recently saw on TV. Most Labour activists in Bermondsey are actively involved in local community organisations and campaigns – I myself spend more time on these than I do on the Labour Party, and am not untypical in this. But the 'community politics' practised by the Liberals, as their chief vote-catching strategy, is something that the Labour Party should approach with caution. If it is a genuine attempt to restore the essential community links that any party must constantly be strengthening and extending, to recognise that a party which does not put people first shouldn't be in business, all well and good. But if it is a cynical attempt to ingratiate oneself with the electorate, to exploit vague animus against anyone in particular, or to provide yet another photograph of the clean-cut Liberal pointing at Mrs Smith's damp patch (for a newsletter which is strangely silent about the causes and the means to alleviate that problem), then the result of that dishonesty will be future disillusion.

What the Bermondsey result may have exposed is the myth of the safe Labour seat. I have heard it suggested more than once, in Bermondsey, that a baboon with a Labour rosette on its chest could be elected. Labour has held onto Bermondsey for 60 years, we are told, but how deep was the electorate's commitment to Labour? On what was it based? Not much, if it could be tossed aside in the week before polling day. It seems to me that, too often in the Labour Party, we mistake habit for commitment.

On one estate that I canvassed, an elderly man spoke with feeling about the Labour Party in the days when he paid it twopence a week, and even used it to buy his cigarettes. He wasn't voting Labour now because, 36 years ago, the GLC bought from a private landlord the property that he rented, and didn't maintain it properly. Vainly, I tried to point out that the house in which he now lived – in one of the most attractive new developments in the constituency – was built seven years ago by the GLC. He didn't want to know, because the GLC had made 'Pakkies over there and blacks over there' his neighbours.

THE 'OLD GUARD' IS perfectly correct to say that we should respect the Labour Party's traditions and honour the reflections of its lifelong supporters. At the same time, we ought to remember that the Labour Party has other traditions – traditions of radical, socialist thinking and action – that many Bermondsey old-timers remember as vividly as the social dimension. It is a measure of the state into which political educa-

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tion has fallen in the Labour Party that it should be necessary to broach these subjects in a manner which is almost apologetic. The 'real Labour' tradition – to borrow a phrase from the 'draymen' – has as much to do with vigorous debate, and the putting of the socialist challenge, as it has to do with Party bingo sessions, or nostalgic memories excised of political content. Peter Tatchell tried to fight an election campaign on policies both relevant to local people and socialist in intent (and which, if examined, hardly constitute an 'extremist' or 'far left' package). He was not allowed to do so. The non-political triumphed.

It is preposterous that – at a time of mass unemployment; the neutering of the welfare state; accelerating nuclear threats – the substantive issue at a by-election was the choice between Tatchell and Hughes. Was Mrs Thatcher mentioned?

The task now for the Labour Party, both in Bermondsey and the country, is to demonstrate that it can, once more, entertain with its natural supporters a dialogue based on an honest political relationship, not the manipulation of extinct responses. The reality which will have to be faced is that the Labour Party has changed, in the same way that social and political conditions in Britain have changed. Those who say 'the Labour Party is not what it was' need to be told 'and a good thing, too'.

A party which has not made any attempt to come to terms with the nature and experiences of the contemporary electorate – with the striking changes that have taken place in the working class itself – hardly deserves to be accepted by the voters as a viable alternative to the new Conservatism. The creation of the SDP was supposedly based on a consensual view that the mould of British politics was in need of recasting. Those 'moderate' spirits who gathered in Limehouse certainly believed that the party political system needed to catch up with the realities of British life, even if the trail they opened up – *pace* the freak Bermondsey result and its opinion-poll knock-on effect – has yet to be seen to be leading anywhere constructive.

The Labour Party, too, needs to break some moulds, as a swelling body of its ordinary members recognise. One of the consolations of the defeat of the Mellish/O'Grady partnership is that we may be spared further disquisitions on the Labour Party's elusive soul.

Leaving aside such diversions and keeping our eyes and ears open to what is actually going on in British society today, and matching our politics to it, we may begin to satisfy people like my neighbour – an attractive woman in her early forties and, willy-nilly, a Tatchell apologist in the days leading up to the polling in the shops and streets of North Southwark. Stopping me in the street on polling day, she seemed bewildered at what was happening. Why wasn't the Labour Party leading the assault on Mrs Thatcher's eulogy of Victorian values: 'Those days weren't much fun for our people were they?'. A 'real Bermondsey Labour' party should be answering her question. □

HI-TECH

Whitehall sell-out

David Holmes reports on a failure of industrial policy

THIS WEEK, an American company, Prime computers, made 38 of its new employees in Britain redundant. Nothing remarkable in that – it's the sort of thing that happens every day. But behind Prime's decision lies a sorry history of a crucial British advance in high technology being squandered through lack of government support and short-sighted, ill-informed decisions by the bodies which invest public money in industrial development. The consequences for Britain's stake in high technology industries and for the long-term survival of British engineering are extremely grave.

The employees who have just been given notice work for a company called Compeda, set up in 1979 with £4 million from the National Research Development Corporation (NRDC). Compeda's initial purpose was to market quality software products developed by universities and state-funded research establishments in the field of Computer Aided Design (CAD).

CAD is the creation of graphic images on a monitor screen backed by a computer. It allows drafting and design work to be done very quickly, with much less risk of error and much more opportunity for experiment. The Department of Industry recognises the strategic importance of CAD for the future of British industry.

All CAD companies were increasing their turnover as the cost of computer 'hardware' fell rapidly and demand, especially overseas, soared. British companies were making and selling some of the most advanced CAD systems in the world. One of the systems marketed by Compeda is PDMS (Plant Design and Management System). PDMS was developed by the Cambridge CAD Centre and is recognised as being ahead of anything else in the field. (It is a method of simulating in 3-D the design of complex process plants like oil refineries.) Having broken even in 1981 on a turnover of £2.8 million, Compeda made a loss in 1982 of £1.5 million on an increased turnover of £3.3 million.

BTG – set up in 1981 by a merger of the NRDC and the National Enterprise Board (NEB) – then decided to sell Compeda, effectively writing off its own investment in the company, rather than to back its expensive second phase of operation. The BTG had neither been able to attract private capital to Compeda, nor was it willing to encourage private sector investment by underwriting it with BTG guarantees.

Last autumn, the US-based Computervision, the CAD market leader, put in the best offer to buy Compeda – believed to be around £5 million. The BTG recommended it be accepted. But as Computervision had just bought another leading British CAD company – Cambridge Interactive Systems – the Department of Industry feared Computervision would merely strip Compeda's assets. So Prime computers, also American, was invited to bid instead. The staff were put on three months notice and a number of them left because of the uncertainty. In the end, Prime managed to acquire Compeda for the knock-down price of £1 million plus royalties on sales, and the concession that the 'intellectual property rights' to PDMS remain in the UK.

The ignominious sale of a leading British hi-tech company is blamed by people in Compeda on the BTG and its panic that it might not meet government demands that BTG companies make a quick return on investments. One ex-employee believes Compeda could easily have obtained a 30 per cent share of the world CAD systems market for very little outlay had the BTG been prepared to back it.

THE COMPEDA STORY has been repeated, with variations, throughout the British CAD industry. Last week, the US computer giant Control Data acquired a 30 per cent shareholding in Systime, the UK computer systems company. Systime was successful but could get no more support from BTG. The sale of the Cambridge CAD Centre is pending and US companies are rumoured to be in the running to buy it. The BTG's £2 million majority shareholding in the CAD arm of the Quest group has just been sold to Arab buyers who have no background in CAD and are not expected to be able to make the most of the company's potential. A DoI spokesman said weakly that the buyers were 'well known anglophiles'.

Computervision bought Cambridge Interactive Systems last November for an undisclosed sum. CIS produces the Medusa system, a 'state of the art' CAD software product. Uncertainty now hangs over the highly successful company because Computervision has failed to declare its plans for the company. One CAD consultant told me: 'I would normally recommend anyone to buy Medusa, but at the moment I just can't

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do that.' In the words of one CAD company head: 'There is no CAD industry left in the UK today.'

Another charge laid against BTG's management of its financing of CAD companies is that it spread too little money too thinly. During 1982 a series of highly confidential talks took place, co-ordinated by the Department of Industry, between three of the then principal UK CAD companies. They were Racal Redac, Quest and Compeda. The aim was to emulate the Japanese success in co-ordinating strong government backing for industries in one chosen centre in order to achieve a pre-determined international market share.

Last September the talks broke down. Although the reasons have not been officially disclosed, the breakdown has widely been attributed in the industry to a lack of will by the DoI. Racal – the largest company – would naturally have been expected to play the leading role in the merger, and to restructure a new company to integrate the component parts. The money being offered by the DoI – £10 million – and the political backing were not enough to persuade Racal to go ahead with the task.

It was after these talks broke down that the BTG began to back away from its longest standing CAD commitments – to Quest and Compeda, which desperately needed large capital investment to survive. A NEDO report last month on information technology (IT) pointed out the alarming degree to which the British IT industry is 'relatively small and fragmented at a time when international competition is actively developing a high-volume, broadly-based systems capability in IT'. It also criticised the DoI's 'largely unco-ordinated response to a wide variety of competing demands for severely limited resources and expertise.'

Despite the report's stress on the need for government actively to encourage British companies to take up British CAD products, the DoI's own 'Awareness' seminars seem to have had almost no impact. A confidential report submitted to the Department by the Cranfield Institute of Technology, which runs the most comprehensive range of in-depth CAD courses, points out that so far not a single person has come from an 'Awareness' seminar to a Cranfield course.

On top of what has been described as the BTG's planning paralysis and 'paranoia' at meeting government requirements, the ability of the BTG to intervene actively in any area of high technology is now in doubt. The request by BTG chairman Sir Freddie Wood for a £100 million one-off 'dowry' has been turned down. Funding is down to £10 million this year from £52 million when the Group was set up in 1981. The withdrawal of the BTG from British CAD companies has allowed foreign companies, especially American, to swoop like vultures on the small British enterprises. The notice given to a quarter of Compeda's employees by their new American owners has increased fears that, once overseas interests have acquired the new British products, the companies that designed them will be allowed to wither away. □

CONSERVATISM

Fears and fancies

Raphael Samuel continues his series of articles on the historic roots of Thatcherism

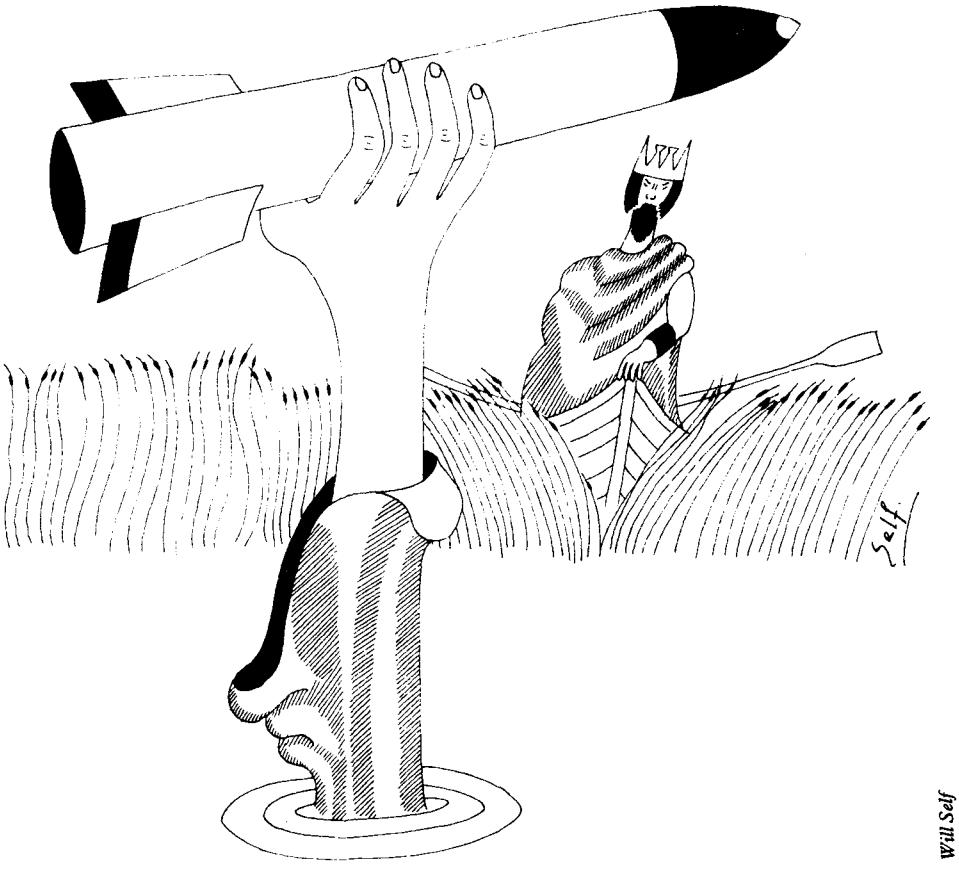
FOR ALL THEIR AFFECTATION of hard-nosed realism, Conservatives inhabit a make-believe world, indulging in a taste for the dramatic and feeding on archetype and myth. Like other parties, they are apt to represent politics as a moral drama in which good and evil are locked together in mortal combat, but, at the same time, they see themselves as being, in some sort, above politics – a knightly chivalry acting to defend liberty against the oligarchs.

Conservatives seek power, not to enjoy the fruits of office (for they are reluctant politicians who would rather be doing something else), still less to defend class privilege (their only interest is the public good), but, as the 1951 election manifesto put it, 'to enable the British people to lead their traditional way of life'. To quote Sir Ian Gilmour, an otherwise sophisticated writer, 'Anything that is good for the country is good for Conservatism.'

As well as being a party of the highest principle, the Conservative Party (in its idealised version of itself) is a living embodiment of national character, combining stoic virtue with sturdy common sense – 'the much-tried common sense' which (according to Conservative Podsnappery) 'is the peculiarity of the English people'. Conservatives do not make empty promises or offer easy answers. They are practical and down-to-earth where their opponents are 'airy-fairy'; realistic where they are sentimental; flexible where they are dogmatic. Conservatives are right-minded people who know *instinctively* what to do, because it is in their nature, as Conservatives, to do so. They do not, in the ordinary sense of the word, think; they arrive at their policies by what Mrs Thatcher calls (in relation to monetarism) 'sheer common sense'.

In a more romantic vein, Conservatives see themselves as engaged in a quest for glory, and give to the notion of national destiny the primacy which socialists ascribe to class. History to them is not a Calvary of the oppressed, but rather a costume drama, a pageant in which their gods and heroes disport themselves. In Sir Winston Churchill's idiom, it is 'the marvellous story of Britain's greatness'.

The Falklands War was clearly satisfying to this spirit of romance, and the very quix-



Will Self

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otic nature of the enterprise – the fact that no material or strategic interests were involved – seems to have enhanced its symbolic appeal. War to the Conservatives (as I tried to suggest in a previous article) is a sacred matter, a seed time of martyrs and heroes. It serves as the right wing's imaginative equivalent to revolutionary dreams on the Left, though with discipline rather than liberation as the keynote. Above all, war is the crucible in which national identities are forged and national loyalties confirmed.

The Falklands war also corresponded (or was made to correspond) to the chivalric myths which the nation holds about its past. According to the myth – the imperialist version of the Arthurian legend – wars are engaged in as matters of honour and take the form of a gallant rescue. The kelpers were cast in the 1914 role of 'gallant little Belgium'; the Task Force were the free-born Englishmen standing up to foreign bullies; while General Galtieri was given the paradigmatic attributes of the tyrant – as fanatical as the Mahdi of Sudan, as pigheaded as President Kruger. For Conservatives, the war was not tragedy but triumph, a proof of the nation's manhood. Within days, it was being used as a Party fable. Mrs Thatcher, as is well known, invoked it in her Cheltenham speech to browbeat the railwaymen into accepting flexible rostering. Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, preferred to use it as a parable for privatisation.

Business, too, can be made to correspond (in contemporary Conservative rhetoric) to archetypal fantasy and myth – with Svengali-like shop stewards to be ousted by managerial knights, trade-union barons to be humbled, and the freeborn Englishman given his rightful due. The businessman is no longer a manager or corporate executive, but a rugged individualist, moved by a spirit of free enterprise and showing his character and daring by embarking on commercial adventure.

Conservative fears are, if anything, even more heavily mythologised than their fantasies. At the merest mention of the word 'equality', Conservatives are apt to hear the sound of the tumbrils; while Marxism, in any of its varieties, is a Frankenstein monster conjured up from the lower depths. Again, at any threat to public order, Conservatives persuade themselves that the barbarians are at the gate, as is shown by the pride of place that is given to 'law-and-order' questions at Party conference.

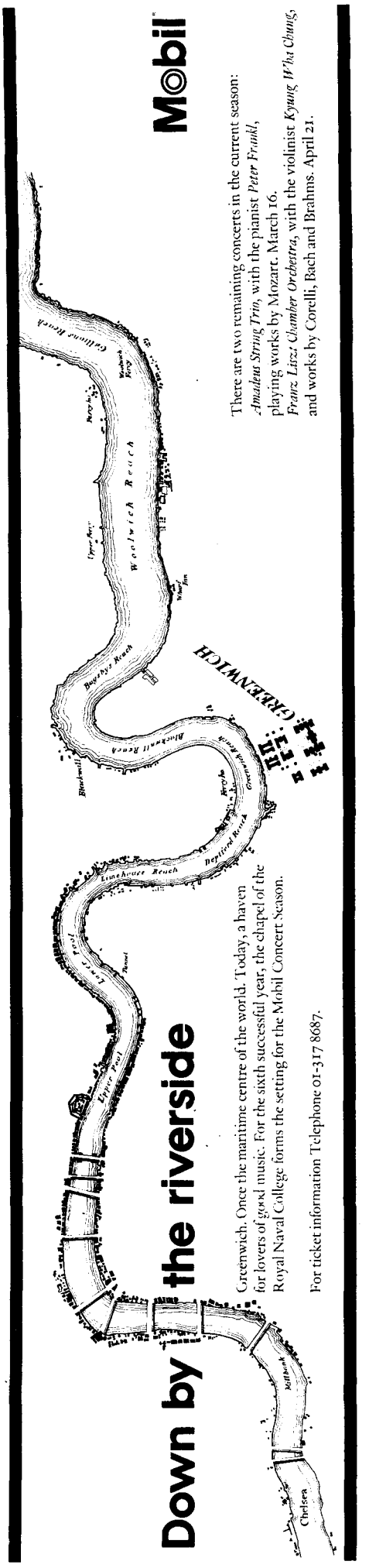
A closely-related Conservative fear has been that of aliens – first the Irish; then the Jews; latterly the Caribbeans. In each case, the derogatory stereotype was constituted by what Lorrimer calls a 'photographic negative' of the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants. The offending race was not only physiologically different, but also morally contaminating and culturally inferior, whether because they were child-like 'Orang-Outangs' (Irish), or 'criminal and diseased' (Jews), or, latterly (in the case of the Caribbeans), because they are 'lawless'. John Casey, a Cambridge don, writing in the first issue of *The Salisbury Review*, finds them 'structurally . . . at odds' with English civilisation. 'There is the extraordinary resentment towards authority – police, teachers, Underground guards – *all* authority.'

A KINDRED EXAMPLE OF negative symbolisation is the constitution of the Conservatives as 'the national party' and the stigmatisation of their political opponents as representatives of 'cosmopolitan principles', either on account of their 'foreign' sympathies (like the 'radical dallying with Krugerism' alleged against the pro-Boers); or because of their pacifism (like the 'swithering neutrals' of the First World War); or because they are that un-English thing 'extremists and fanatics' – usually, as in the case of CND today, all three.

As an axis of political division, this has its origins in the period of the French revolutionary wars, when modern Toryism was constituted as the party of social order, and the democratic opposition were stigmatised as seditious, and suppressed by the machinery of state. The potential for its renewal was crafted by the democratic universalism which, in mid-Victorian times, was a major component of both Liberalism and working-class radicalism. But it was in the 1870s, Hugh Cunningham has argued (*Victorian Studies*, 1971; *History Workshop Journal*, 1981), that Tory patriotism crystallised in its modern form, with Disraeli espousing the cause of Empire, and promoting the cult of monarchy. Cunningham argues that the decisive moment was during the Russian war scare of Spring 1878, when 'Traitor Gladstone' was burnt in effigy at meetings and torchlight processions all over the country, and Liberal opposition to war preparations cowed.

Lord Salisbury, though disclaiming any intention of playing the 'national' card, was not averse to manipulating it when the occasion arose, winning the election of 1886 on the issue of Irish Home Rule, and the 'khaki' election of 1900 on that of the Boer War. As a man with a very clear perception of class war and a deep fear of it, he used the national question both to defeat his Liberal enemies and to mobilise working-class support for the imperialist objectives of the state. The following powerful address, delivered at a demonstration in Plymouth, at a time when General Gordon was besieged in Khartoum, may give some indication of how these objectives were fused in a single rhetoric:

> Mr Gladstone has never been able heartily to take up the sceptre of English power. He has always held it as if it burnt his fingers. He has always faltered in the presence of every power with which he has had to deal. (Hear, hear) . . . Now we have General Gordon shut up in the fortress of Khartoum ('shame'), taunting us with the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrison he was sent to save, and we are informed . . . that the government are in doubt whether he is surrounded. You will understand that the great object of our policy in Egypt is to attract to us the goodwill of the various tribes composing the population of that kingdom, and you will doubtless understand that in all countries, and especially in Oriental countries, love, allegiance, and affection are given to the powerful and refused to the weak . . . ▶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> This is . . . a matter which . . . concerns most of all that class of working men with whom the power of decision in this operation rests, and who will be the first to feel the result of any weakness or error (cheers) . . . Do you imagine that we should be the England that we are if our forefathers had not done the deeds which we admire? . . . Do you think that if you had never conquered India, or if you had never resisted Napoleon, you would be a happier, a more peaceful, a more prosperous, a more contented nation? ('No, no,' and cheers).

Conservatives have often exhibited an almost Elizabethan sense of conspiracy and plot. One might refer, in the present day, to the conviction expressed by the Marquess of Salisbury (*Salisbury Review*, Winter 1983, p.35) that the Church of England is the 'self-appointed fifth column of the Communist Party'. Older *New Statesman* readers will recall the Gestapo scare of the 1945 election, when Professor Harold Laski, the then chairman of the Labour Party, was cast in the improbable role of the would-be English Führer, and the Labour Party, under Mr Attlee, was said to be planning on the introduction of a political police. The Zinoviev Letter scare – the 'Bolshevist plot' which helped to win them the 1924 election – is an even more striking example of how the Conservatives are apt to be terrified by spectres of their own making. Launched three days before the election, through the combined efforts of the Foreign Office and the *Daily Mail*, it was taken up with enthusiasm as a way of destroying that most moderate of Labour premiers, Ramsay MacDonald. That flower of the Balliol intellect, Lord Curzon, a former viceroy of India, made the responsible comment that anyone who voted Labour tomorrow was voting for handing the country over to the Communists and Moscow.

THESE ELECTORAL EXAMPLES of Conservative *Grand Guignol* are particular instances of a much more general motif in which a conspiracy of extremists is alleged to be hiding behind a respectable front. Thus, in the period of the first Labour government (1924) Ramsay MacDonald and the 'responsible' ministers were supposed to be in thrall to a cabal of back-bench extremists (presumably the Clydesiders) while, behind them, stood an even more diabolical power, the Communist International in Moscow. Behind the bad there is always something worse; the more moderate the leaders, the greater the element of cover-up. What is at issue is neither policy nor practice, but Satanic potential, and it is under this optic, no doubt, that the Militant Tendency, who have never done anything more revolutionary than pack a GMC, have been projected in the national press as Robespierres and St Justs.

It is some measure of this propensity to hysteria that Conservatives have often been tempted to suppose that their opponents might be mad. Gladstone, at the time of the Home Rule crisis, was thought to have 'all the symptoms of advanced lunacy' and 'innumerable stories' were circulated in the inner sanctum of the Conservative Party to prove it (Cooke and Vincent, *The Governing Passion*, pp. 66, 461). Readers of *The Times* will know that Roger Scruton came to a similar conclusion recently, when proposing that Ken Livingstone be locked up in a playpen.

The suffragettes, of course (as Brian Harrison has shown in his study of the conservative opposition to them) were often de-legitimated in this way, as 'masculine women', 'the shrieking sisterhood', 'fanatical women', etc. They were stigmatised as 'social failures' because they were alleged to be unmarried or childless. And when the movement moved into its militant phase it was widely believed that the women were possessed, as by some ancient mania. Much the same venom has been directed, in recent weeks, against the women of Greenham Common, who have been stigmatised as 'proselytising Lesbians, hefty ladies with snow on their bootees and other adornments of British womanhood'. □

Raphael Samuel will return next week to the sexual politics of the Conservative Party and the way they inform both its fantasies and its fears.

SPYING

Spooks down under

Duncan Campbell details the close links of British and Australian spies

A HITHERTO SECRET report on Australian espionage and security agencies – originally commissioned by the former Labour Prime Minister Gough Whitlam – provides an unsavory close-up of international espionage. Details of collusion and co-operation among nearly a dozen spy agencies are given in this top secret 1977 report from the Australian Royal Commission on Intelligence, chaired by Judge Justice Hope.

The report gives considerable detail about the activities of the two intelligence services most closely involved in Australia – the American CIA and the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, popularly known as MI6). Until the 1970s, the existence of the Australian SIS (ASIS) was a complete secret to most Australian politicians.

Besides the close affinity of the English-speaking secret agencies to each other, ASIS, SIS and the CIA have tried to set up 'liaison' relationships with the secret police or intelligence agencies of other countries. The Hope report reads almost like a directory of these agencies – many of them with bloodstained records – like Bakin in Indonesia, or the Malaysian MEIO and Special Branch. Others, like Japan's Cabinet Research Office, or the Dutch spy agency, the IDB (Inlichtingen Dienst Buitenland), or the Philippines National Intelligence and Security Agency, are little known even in their own countries.

Liaison, as the Hope report makes clear, is a polite term for the way in which 'aggressive foreign intelligence collectors' – like SIS or ASIS – try to recruit spies inside other 'friendly' intelligence services. This is held to have many advantages. The agencies

> can penetrate the liaison services. Successful penetration would result in an enhanced flow of intelligence to consumers, and would help to reduce the counter-intelligence capacity of the penetrated service . . .

With the CIA and SIS, however, the penetration and counter-penetration games are not necessary. Australian and British SIS operations are closely integrated throughout the Far East and elsewhere. SIS has given the Australians a copy of their Far East personality card index – a target list of potential spies, which is 'believed to make ASIS records the most complete foreign personality index in Australia'. ASIS agents are free to pop in to British or American embassies in foreign territories for 'professional' discussions and advice from the CIA and SIS.

In London, an ASIS official works inside SIS's HQ, at Century House near Waterloo, specialising in Chinese 'counter-intelligence targeting'. Another two Australians are in the SIS Technical Team based in the UK and 'employed as required on operational duties overseas'. The Technical Team includes specialists in illegal entry, theft, and bugging. For a time, other Australians worked inside the SIS London City station in Vauxhall Bridge Road. In the jargon used by the spy services, Century House is the 'Head Office'. ASIS's HQ, at St Kilda's Road in Melbourne, is 'Main Office'.

The Australians also work inside the SIS Far East Headquarters in Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Special Branch. This organisation is the spy world's key centre for 'China-watching'. SIS has disguised its HQ as a 'Study Group' inside the military headquarters of British Forces in Hong Kong. But the name of the SIS chief, or 'Head of Study Group', Mr Barry Gane, is openly listed in military directories. (SIS used to have its Far East HQ in Singapore, and SIS agents are still based there, attached to an ANZUK (Australia-New Zealand-UK) 'Intelligence Group'.)

Similarly, an Oman Research Department (ORD) has been set up more recently as a Middle Eastern SIS HQ. Its head, John Ault, is a full time SIS official who formerly ran the service's training school at Fort Monkton, near Gosport, Hants.

The Australians assist SIS by looking after its stockpile of equipment for emergency 'Special Operations' – which could include sabotage, assassination, 'black' propaganda, guerrilla warfare, supporting underground movements, or staging *coups d'etat*. The British stockpile is held by ASIS on Swan Island, near Queenscliff in Victoria. The 734 acre island is ASIS's main training centre. Here, according to Australia's *National Times* newspaper, Australian military officers were trained to participate

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in the CIA assassination programme in Vietnam, Operation Phoenix.

ASIS's GREATEST assistance to the CIA, however, was in Cambodia and Chile. In both countries the CIA, fearing the expulsion of US diplomats and with them the core of the CIA presence, asked the Australians to take over CIA agents and operations. This began in Cambodia in 1965, when the US mission was expelled, and in Chile in 1970, after Salvador Allende took power.

Australia took over all British spying in the Philippines in 1966, the report reveals. The SIS station in Manila was closed down, and ASIS opened up, with two officials there also representing SIS in dealings with the local spy agency, NISA.

The Hope report gave precise details of the whereabouts of all Australian (and some British) intelligence officers, explaining who was 'declared' to the host government. It is common practice to 'declare' only one officer out of several working in a country. 'Undeclared' officers are then free clandestinely to recruit agents against the 'internal target' – the host government.

British-Australian secret intelligence collaboration includes the use of an Australian secret base – the ASIS Radio Communications Station at Darwin in the Northern Territory, disguised as an Australian Army base. Close by is the British Government Wireless Relay Station, Darwin – the main link between London and British embassies in the Far East. Any 'Special Operations' would be co-ordinated via the Darwin stations.

Exercises to practice these Special Operations have been held in the recent past by SIS and ASIS; in Papua-New Guinea in 1970 and in Malaysia in 1971. Even though the likelihood of British military or secret service action in the Far East is now less likely than in the 60s, according to the report,

> (SIS) give ASIS access to their research and development capacity in specialised equipment and to their current experience and training in clandestine operational techniques.

Australian intelligence officers come to Britain to be trained at the SIS training HQ in Blackfriars Road, London, and at Fort Monkton. The training concentrates 'on European and Middle East conditions'. So ASIS also has its own training centre for spying methods more suitable to the Far East.

SIS has given the Australians access to 'technical methods of the utmost sensitivity' and provided equipment for this purpose. There has been a 'free exchange of information between the two services on equipment specially designed to collect intelligence by technical methods'.

The closest liaison of all is over Top Secret 'Humint' reports – intelligence gathered by the spies of each respective service. By 1974, according to the Hope Commission, ASIS had received over 44,000 British secret intelligence reports, and about 50,000 CIA reports. In return the CIA and SIS had received most of the ASIS output, some 10,000 reports. The traffic from SIS and the CIA continued after 1974 at reduced levels of around 1,000 reports annually. (ASIS provided about 500 reports a year in return. This drop reflected 'the loss of stations (and agents) in Vietnam and Cambodia.)

The 'Humint' reports from each service are guarded by special codewords or phrases: 'CX' for the British, 'REMARKABLE' for the CIA, 'OYSTER' for the Australians. Less secret information that is nonetheless 'interesting' goes out as an 'Intelligence Liaison Officer minute'.

The Australian SIS was set up in 1950 with SIS encouragement and the advice of a senior SIS official, Colonel C. H. Ellis – who later turned out to have been a spy both for Nazi Germany and for the Soviet Union. Ellis later stayed on with ASIS as a Special Adviser. The compact between Britain and Australia was sealed by an exchange of letters between British and Australian Prime Ministers in May 1950. An ASIS charter was drawn up (dated 13 May 1950) – presumably based on SIS's own authority – giving ASIS power to withhold information from government ministers. 'They are to be furnished with such information only as may be necessary for the determination of the issue', the ASIS Director was told.

In 1957, when the Australian government proposed to close ASIS, both CIA and SIS lobbied successfully against the suggestion. The Vice-Chief of SIS, Sir James Easton, flew specially to Australia to lobby the Prime Minister. ASIS later became involved not just in intelligence gathering but in covert operations, or 'Special Political Action', as it was euphemistically called:

> the development and exploitation of agents of influence, clandestine propaganda and placement of press materials, and secret funding operations: eg of political groups and/or trade unions in a foreign country.

The Hope report concluded that Australia should retain ASIS as an 'aggressive foreign intelligence collection agency'; it therefore planned, like SIS and the CIA, to carry out international law-breaking: 'ASIS exists to conduct espionage against foreign countries . . . in all cases, espionage is illegal and the clandestine service's job is to break those laws without being caught.' In a commentary which anticipated the *laissez faire* government attitude to clandestine services which SIS has always enjoyed (and which has been restored for the CIA by the Reagan Administration), Hope urged that ASIS should be allowed to carry on with an 'attack function' of espionage and subversion. □

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

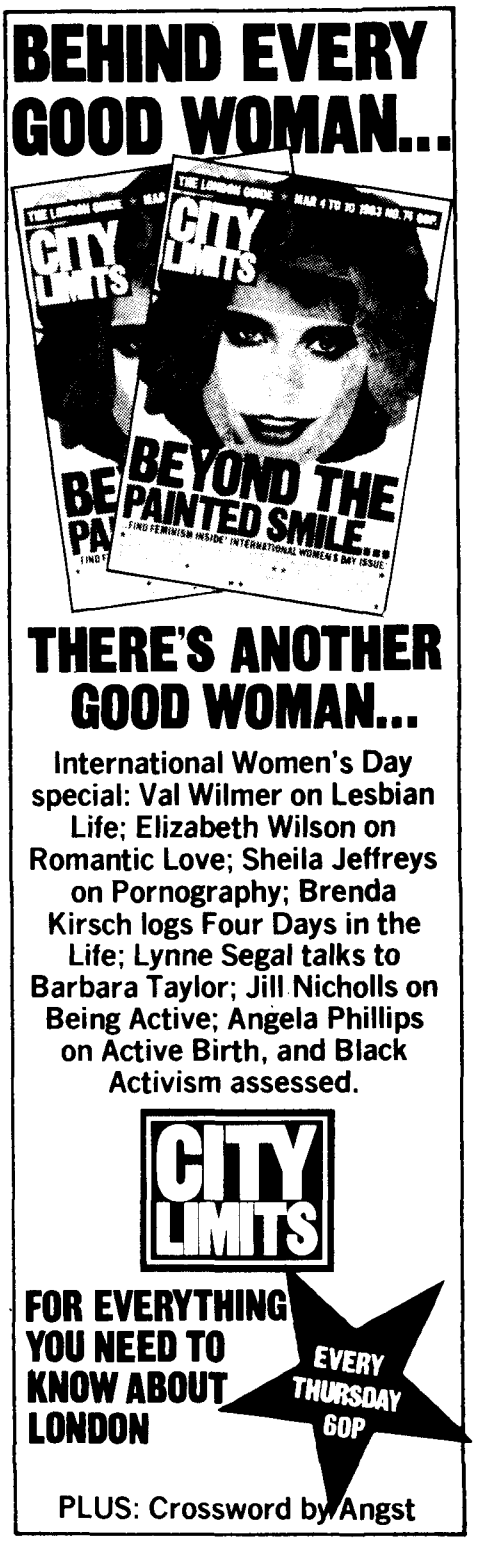
☐ Bobby Gould, the Bristol Rovers manager, has fined himself £200 following an outburst after the 3-0 defeat at Bradford City last Saturday. – *Guardian* (Hugh Collis)

☐ The developer who converted the flats from the derelict shell of the house in Melrose Avenue says: 'The flats are worth about £33,000 or £34,000. But since the murders came out I have had several offers of nearly £40,000.' – *The Standard* (Russell Holmes)

☐ Mark Tekinalp said: 'We certainly didn't see anything strange although I must admit I remember seeing some bloodstains in one of the downstairs rooms.' – *The Standard* (K. Lovel)

☐ Royal officials yesterday barred a blind charity worker's guide dog from Buckingham Palace, with the approval of the Queen. Mrs Jill Allen, aged 42, was being honoured by the Queen for her 11-year campaign to get blind people and their dogs access to public buildings. – *The Times* (Heather Weeks)

☐ His girlfriend, Imogen Lucas-Box, aged 25, was in court. She arrived with representatives of the *Daily Mail* and a solicitor. – *Guardian* (Irmtraut Leirer)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DIARY

Christopher Price

As the dust clears over Bermondsey, certain sober reflections are possible. (They were not possible on the night, as I'd drowned my sorrows overmuch.) The first is that Michael's simple determination to stay no longer stops the speculation. Only real success at Darlington and thereafter can now kill that story. Nor should the Left – or even the 'chiliastic' Left as Crosland used to call it – be made the scapegoats; like Jesus's poor they have always been with us, and in the past their power and passion has been integrated into the Party struggle. That Labour now has a reputation for unrelenting schism, is the fault of both Left and Right. It takes two to quarrel. True Bermondsey, the original home of British boxing, finally tired of a wasted decade of *local*, self-indulgent, Labour fisticuffs. But Labour's problem is not just – or even primarily – its chronic addiction to mutual, open invective. Nor was it just deficient organisation that sunk us at Bermondsey – though there was plenty of that. Labour's fundamental problem over the past 15 years has been a consistent failure to generate any spark of political imagination. We have concentrated on too many irrelevancies; from nuclear energy to open government we have allowed others to steal our best tunes. We are regarded by those electors we need for a parliamentary majority as just plain boring. This compelling truth was driven home to me by the pamphlet I was given to hand out on polling day; under the less-than-inspiring title TRADE UNIONS BACK TATCHELL, it showed Jack Jones and Peter shaking hands. In the hour of our crisis, we presented ourselves as the party of the elderly, male trade unionist.

○

Peter, however, showed guts from the beginning to the end of the campaign. He took an inordinate amount of flak and Bermondsey would do well to re-adopt him. He has started a struggle in Labour's heartland against prurient, sexual prejudice, which could be as long and bitter as that of the suffragettes. If he wants to see it through he should be allowed to. It must worry even David Steel that his candidate won in the wake of a campaign (not by the Liberal) of crude, anti-homosexual smears; and that waiting in the social democrat wings are some of the most reactionary politicians at large – like James Wellbeloved of Erith and Crayford – ready to ride to power on Liberal coat-tails. So far David has maintained a remarkably 'clean' image for his party. When there's just a little more exposure on TV of the state to which Liverpool Liberals have brought their city, even that sheen might begin to wear off.

○

But the media shifts right with the electorate. Saddest for me is the abandonment by Rupert Murdoch's *Sunday Times* of any pretence of its old independent, investigative journalism. Last Sunday it read like a Tory Central Office news sheet: a panegyric of our Tourism minister, Ian Sproat – possibly the most distateful of all Thatcher acolytes – which made much of his demand that the Metropolitan Police sanitise Leicester Square for the tourists by rounding up the down-and-outs, just as his government was trying to kill a Bill in Parliament to house them properly; a paean in praise of David Young of the Manpower Services Commission for his Youth Training Scheme, just as the whole exercise is known to be falling apart because too few employers will cooperate; and a glutinous interview with the Prime Minister herself, through which Hugo Young's gentle sarcasm may not have penetrated to every reader. The passage about doctors confirmed to me that power has now gone to her head and she is quite psychotic. What about private sector doctors?, ventured Hugo. Didn't all that damage the Health Service? Not at all. They brought growth and *exports*. I had a vision of Harley Street leading the export drive, with its female circumcisions and abortions and facelifts for foreigners, and then pumping back the profits into Lewisham's 19th century hospital. But it was all somehow just too implausible a scenario.

○

This 'new' Tory philsophy is neither new nor philosophic. It's just a device to let the rich get richer; and to let the top monopoly professions boost their personal incomes – much as Norman Tebbit, while working for BALPA, helped airline plots to astronomic wage levels. The farmers are the most recent favoured group among the rich, with a 45 per cent boost in their incomes. I suppose it's just a timely reminder that the language of Victorian morality is back in vogue. The undeserving water workers are 'bully boys' if they want a wage increase; but Harley Street surgeons and gentlemen farmers are wealth creators and wouldn't bully anyone. At the end of the Hugo Young interview, the Prime Minister told us she was re-reading the Ten Commandments; I must ask her about the Tenth; I would have thought that keeping up with the doctors and farmers, and coveting their wives and maids and asses was the whole basis of her political philosophy.

○

We're still arguing in Committee about detention and confessions in the Police Bill. The dispute centres round the right to lock you up *before* you're charged with some crime. In Scotland they allow the Police six hours – but in England it's to be four days. The police say they need to lock you up to find clues; but experience indicates it's for exactly the opposite reason – to force confessions and make the finding of clues quite unnecessary. In the Confait case, to which I return *ad nauseam* during the Committee Stage of the Bill, once the confessions were forced, all investigation ceased. In the dead man's room, the police found a record player – but no records – just one little triangular inside piece of a 45 record lying on the floor. It was one of the vital clues, but neither the police, nor the defence nor the subsequent inquiry noticed its significance in the photographs. Why? Because the 'confession' totally distracted attention. No one checked up on Confait's previous cellmate in jail – which would have led straight to the real murderer. Why? Same reason. It's easier to bully than to think. Our side are demanding tape-recording of interviews. Ironically, in Northern Ireland there is video surveillance of every police interview – but just to help the police control suspects, not to see fair play in court. No record is made for the defence. In Scotland there has to be corroboration of every confession; that's the least the government should be prepared to concede also for us English.

ROGER WODDIS

Talk of the Devil

According to a recent survey, most people in Britain still believe in sin, and nearly a third believe in hell and the devil.

As I wandered alone through the city
I came to a welcoming inn,
Where some were awash with self-pity
And some drowned their sorrows in gin,
While others had formed a committee
To study the question of sin.

And there in a corner, displaying
His horns through the holes in his hat,
A figure, while others were praying,
Of utter malevolence sat,
While all around life was decaying –
But nobody talked about that.

They stared at the floor that was sanded
And sucked at the weed that pollutes,
And one with a notebook expanded
On brimstone and treacle and newts,
And what made the Devil left-handed,
And why there was snow on his boots.

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FOREIGN NEWS: ASSAM

Racism in Assam

Duncan Campbell sets the present murder and violence in context

ON THE WAY INTO TOWN from Gauhati airport in Assam, past the telegraph poles bent double by a recent cyclone, past the bullocks wading through paddy fields with cranes perched on their necks, past the startling flame trees, there stands a battered billboard that proclaims: 'Assam Tourism presents this fairyland to you on a golden platter.'

None of the 19 million inhabitants of this state uneasily lodged between China, Burma and Bangladesh would have chosen the word 'fairyland' to describe what life has been like there over the past few years. Hardly any tourist visas have been granted by central government in New Delhi and Calcutta, and foreign journalists have been banned from entering.

Riots, suspension of elections, a Disturbed Area declaration, curfews, strikes, explosions – and passive resistance on a greater scale than had happened since Indian independence – have, over the last dozen years, hinted at the sort of violence that might eventually engulf Assam. Now, thousands are dead and, according to one Indian journalist this week, 'there seems no end in sight'.

Assam's troubles stem (overtly, at least) from what may seem unhappily familiar. The Assamese 'Sons of the Soil' claim that they are being 'swamped (the word is used by the militant All Gauhati Students' Union) by 'foreigners'. These 'foreigners' are estimated by the Assamese as numbering more than four million and consist mainly of Bangladeshi immigrants and Bengalis.

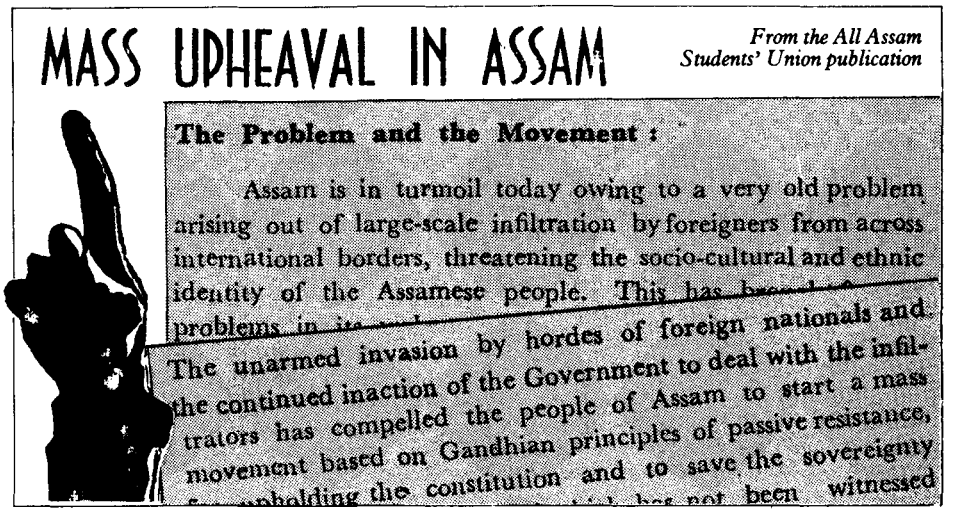
'Look at this street,' said a young Gauhati businessman I met there. 'That beggar, these rickshaw drivers, they are all Bangladeshis. I am a stranger in my own country.'

That phrase and others like it are repeated almost mechanically by Assamese (whose looks owe more to their Thai than Indian origins) to their rare visitors. A few years ago, conversation would have dwelt on plans to visit the magnificent Kaziranga game reserve, or a trip on the Brahmaputra river (symbolic of Assamese identity). Now, it shifts instantly to politics.

The All Assam Students' Union, led by its president Parfulla Kumar Mahanta and general secretary Bhrigu Kumar Phukan, has acted as the spearhead of the anti-foreigner movement. It accuses the immigrants of taking land and jobs from native Assamese and of providing 'vote banks' by cheating their way onto the electoral register. AASU's solution? To deport everyone who has entered the state illegally since 1951 and strike all non-citizens from the electoral roll.

'The Bengalis make no attempt to assimilate,' a young Assamese recently released from prison for 'agitation' told me, as he sipped a Golden Eagle beer on the front steps of his Gauhati home. 'They speak Bengali and never learn Assamese and when more than two families have moved into a village they start their own Bengali school. And the Bangladeshis – why doesn't the rest of India open their doors to them? We are a hospitable people but it is as if you had invited a stranger into your house and they had not only refused to leave but had brought the rest of their family to stay, too.'

Such sentiments have not lacked public endorsement. The weekly *North East Times* editorialises that 'the people of Assam are looking towards the unpolluted youth leadership of Assam'. The students have responded by painting 'Victory to Mother Assam' slogans in the crowded open-drained backstreets of the main towns, and lorries carry the same message on their cab doors.


MASS UPHEAVAL IN ASSAM

From the All Assam Students' Union publication

The Problem and the Movement :

Assam is in turmoil today owing to a very old problem arising out of large-scale infiltration by foreigners from across international borders, threatening the socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Assamese people. This has [illegible] problems in its [illegible]

The unarmed invasion by hordes of foreign nationals and the continued inaction of the Government to deal with the infiltrators has compelled the people of Assam to start a mass movement based on Gandhian principles of passive resistance, [illegible] upholding the constitution and to save the sovereignty [illegible] has not been witnessed

The New Delhi politicians and Calcutta journalists take a very different stance. Many blame the Assamese for inefficiency and maladministration, unconsciously echoing the view of a British colonial officer, John Butler, who wrote, in 1847, of the 'the utter want of an industrious, enterprising spirit and the general degeneracy of the Assamese people'.

And the Left opposition elsewhere in India is also critical of the movement. 'Don't be fooled by their rhetoric,' says a Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) official, who has recently been organising in the east Assam town of Dibrugarh. 'They have more in common with your National Front than the liberation movements they talk about.'

But there is no denying the strength of feeling. A letter to the pro-movement daily, the *Assam Tribune*, has suggested 'that the border is permanently sealed by strong barbed wires and kept under strict surveillance our brave *jawans* (soldiers) which will undoubtedly create a fear psychosis in the minds of those who want to intrude'.

And the 'fear psychosis' suggested by the letter-writer now exists in full measure in Assam. Bengalis and Bangladeshis fear the increasingly militant movement, some members of which now hint at independence for the state. The Assamese activists fear the Indian Army and the Central Reserve Police, which is frequently accused of atrocities, rape and acting as an *agent provocateur*. And the New Delhi government fears publicity so strongly that only a handful of foreigners are ever allowed in. Even Mark Thatcher, who has Assamese connections, was unable to visit – 'Ah, but that wasn't for security reasons,' jokes an urbane Dibrugarh tea-planter, 'we were worried that he'd get lost in the Brahmaputra valley.'

ONE ARGUMENT, HOWEVER, does seem to unite most parties in Assam: that central government has cruelly neglected the area. Certainly, in the crumbling streets, the painfully slow metre-gauge railway, the run-down services, there are ample signs of such neglect.

Overseeing this tension have been the Indian Army and the CRP, alongside the intelligence wings of the Special Frontier Force and Special Service Bureau, which have a dual role of watching the agitation and keeping an eye on the borders (ever-mindful of the Chinese invasion of 1962). On that occasion, central government virtually abandoned the state to the invaders, an action that has clearly increased the Assamese sense of isolation.

If all the existing divisions were not enough, there is also the matter of religion. Unlike most Assamese, the Bangladeshis are mainly Muslim. At the time of partition, the leader of the Muslim League in Assam, Mohammed Saadulla, wanted to take the territory into East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). 'It is not a religious issue,' an AASU supporter told me, 'but who wants to live in an Islamic state?'

It is 160 years since the British Empire

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extended itself into Assam and 35 years since it departed, but there are still traces of the old colonial way of life. The club in the oil town of Digboi runs 'bachelor weekends', pink gins are drunk at the end of cricket games and 'housey' and tennis are still popular in the plantation clubs.

It was Mrs Gandhi's determination that elections should be held this month that sparked off the latest acts of violence, unleashing the smouldering resentments of the tribal areas, the communal distrust and bitterness. Many of the Bangladeshis over whom there has been so much fighting experienced the horrors of the war in Bangladesh in 1971. Now, they fear violence on the same scale. □

Duncan Campbell is on the staff of City Limits.

WEST GERMANY

Nuclear tribunal

Diana Johnstone reports on an unusual meeting

COULD SELECTIVE conscientious objection among officers in the armed forces help push governments towards unilateral nuclear disarmament? This possibility was raised by the 'International Tribunal against First Strike and Mass Destruction Weapons in East and West' staged by the German Green Party in Nuremburg last month. For three days the tribunal laid out arguments for the illegality of atomic war making or planning, which could be cited in defence of government officials or military personnel who refuse 'nuclear service'. These arguments will be developed in similar symbolic tribunals to be held in New York and elsewhere next June.

'Refusal to be an accomplice to nuclear war is not civil disobedience but a way of upholding the law', argued Princeton jurist, Richard Falk – one of over a dozen Americans taking part. Falk and other specialists in international law pointed out that nuclear war is in flagrant violation of international conventions on the rules of war, the protection of civilian non-combatant populations and rights of neutral nations. Falk warned that governments would not obey international law, unless forced to do so by their own citizens. Prominent West German peace researchers and former Bundeswehr Colonel Alfred Mechtersheimer dramatically called on 'all patriots to refuse nuclear service.' NATO's 'suicidal' strategy for a nuclear war that would completely destroy Germany violates German soldiers' oath to defend their country, he said.

The juridical line of argument against nuclear arms has special roots in the Federal Republic of Germany. Dr Gustav Heinemann, a Social Democrat who was later President of the Republic, argued before the Bundestag in 1958 that nuclear weapons broke all rules of war and were thus contrary to the West German constitution – which specifically puts international law above the laws of the Federal Republic.

The tribunal was organised by American-educated Petra Kelly, the Green Party's best-known spokeswoman and Bundestag candidate for Nuremburg. Her idea was to develop the effort to establish 'the authority of conscience' inherent in the 1945-46 Nuremburg War Crimes Tribunal and the more recent symbolic Russell Tribunal. Although US courts now regard the Nuremburg rulings as inoperative, Daniel Ellsberg confided that they had deeply influenced him. Ellsberg said that when, as a Pentagon official, he read plans to escalate nuclear war in case of a Berlin crisis, he felt that he was reading 'evidence for future war crimes trials'. The Nuremberg precedent and knowledge of the Pentagon's nuclear war plans lay behind his decision 12 years ago to disclose the 'Pentagon Papers'. In his testimony to the Green Tribunal, Ellsberg stressed that the 'European Pentagons' were also involved in the 'reckless, criminal planning of nuclear war.'

Ellsberg said that those who could even compare nuclear to conventional war were living 'in the past' – the past of Hiroshima and Nagasaki-sized bombs. Today such bombs are only the triggers for thermo-nuclear weapons vastly more destructive. 'Each weapon is an Auschwitz', he said, 'that would kill two million people, if it landed near two million people, or six million people, if it landed near six million people. Thermo-nuclear war could be the final solution to the human problem.'

Several theologians added their condemnation of nuclear war to that of some 50 jurists, military men, scientists and other expert witnesses from seven NATO countries, Austria, Japan and the Soviet Union. The peace movement evidently wants to bring moral pressure to bear on West Germany's conservative Catholic hierarchy, which has lagged behind German Lutherans and Catholics in other countries on the issue of nuclear war.

A final declaration condemned as criminal any use or threat to use atomic, biological, or chemical weapons; any strategy or armament creating a nuclear 'first strike' capacity; any stationing of weapon systems in outer space; any violent attack on nuclear power stations; and the worldwide spread of technology leading to nuclear war. A seven-person jury – made up of two Americans, a Russian, a German jurist (who had assisted the American prosecutor at Nuremburg), an Austrian woman ecologist, a Dutch priest and a Japanese philosopher – agreed to the verdict after hearing the witnesses.

Dieter Burgmann of the Green Party summed up the proceedings by expressing the hope that 'our foreign guests' would go away with the impression that at least some people in Germany had learned from their atrocious past. To which Ellsberg replied: 'We are all Germans who must learn from the past.' □

SPAIN

Funny business

David Gollob reports on the Rumasa collapse

Madrid

'I'M SPEECHLESS, stunned, I just don't understand.'

With these words Spain's controversial banking and industrial magnate, José Ruiz Mateos, broke his three-day silence over the Socialist government's lightning nationalisation of his business empire, reckoned by his own managers to be worth hundreds of millions of pounds. But government accountants are convinced the country's largest private company is no more than a house of cards.

'I'm a businessman who has worked hard all his life, without desire for monetary gain,' claims Ruiz Mateos, whose career began, aged 12, when he and his brothers pooled their pocket money to lend it out with interest to school chums. In 1961, when he was 30, Ruiz Mateos founded Rumasa with a mere £1,500 capital. The budding wine exporter followed on from his father's business as a *bodega* owner in the Andalucian sherry capital, Jerez de la Frontera.

The government has gone out of its way to stress that the nationalisation is an emergency measure to avert disaster and not any indication of a change in its programme, which plans no significant expansion of the public sector. Over the past few days, the hinted 'possibility' that Rumasa companies might be handed back to private enterprise once restored to health has become an unqualified 'promise'. Though this has reassured big business, unions and leftists within the Socialist Party are openly dismayed at what they see as an ideological setback.

The danger that Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez may soon face is of grassroots restlessness at 'moderate' policies coming to rely on the argument that the catastrophic economic inheritance from previous administrations prohibits real short-term social reform.

On the other hand, the demise of Ruiz Mateos, a member of *Opus Dei* and a Franco supporter, may prove the beginning of the end of an era of Spanish capitalism, typified by weak central government and corruption in business.

Rumasa's fortunes took off when the firm clinched an exclusive 99-year supply contract with Harvey's, the British wine importer. By 1968, the company was turning over in the region of £10 million a year and had bought out scores of small sherry producers, many of them all too eager to quit the declining industry.

From then on, as Spain's economic boom

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petered out, Rumasa's appetite for salvaging ailing companies and, supposedly, restoring them to health became an orgy. Among the 400 or so companies owned by the group (the exact figure is not known), ranging from tourism to ship-building, is the department store chain, Galerias Preciados, sold to it with relief by Franco's widow two years ago.

The key to Ruiz Mateos' success as an empire builder lay in his acquisition of 18 private banks, including the prestigious Banco Atlantico. (Banking accounted for a quarter of the group's annual takings.) But Spain's banking establishment has long been worried by Rumasa's unorthodox practices and 'grow or bust' symptoms typical of so many financially unstable Spanish firms. When credit became tight, Rumasa simply bought up the banks it needed to lend itself the money to keep the group afloat.

Meanwhile, claims Socialist Economics Minister Miguel Boyer, as the holding company continued its frenzied expansion, disguising its losses in swelling turnover figures, effective auditing of the group's affairs became almost impossible.

Indeed, it was Rumasa's attempt to obstruct a government-ordered audit which finally provoked Boyer. Claiming that the group had a tax debt for 1980 alone of £100 million and that figures had been manipulated, the government expropriated Rumasa 'in the interest of the nation'.

The opposition has taken legal action to have the expropriation declared unconstitutional, but the banking community is secretly relieved by the government's move. 'We're glad this is one mess we won't have to clean up ourselves,' a senior banker told me, recalling the collapse of nearly two dozen Spanish banks in the last five years. 'But none of this would have happened if Spanish auditing practices were required by law to be as rigorous as in other countries,' he added. □

ISRAEL

Peace now

Barry Cohen interviews Uri Avneri in London

URI AVNERI IS A veteran of many initiatives for achieving a constructive Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. A former underground fighter and Member of Parliament, he is the leader of the small but vocal left-wing party, Sheli. He is equally well-known as the editor of Israel's largest circulation weekly, *Ha'Olam Ha' Zeh*. At he height of the Israeli bombardment of Beirut, Avneri attracted international attention by crossing the battle lines to interview PLO leader, Yasser Arafat. This move represented a courageous gesture from a leader of the Israeli peace movement. Many of his political opponents in Israel called afterwards for a new law to combat this sort of 'treachery'.

While visiting London this week to speak at a public meeting together with the Palestinian leader, Dr Issam Sartawi, Avneri spoke to the *New Statesman* about the possibilities as well as difficulties confronting his country's peace movement.

Avneri broadly perceives the peace forces as consisting of three concentric circles. The nucleus 'comprises all those people (including the pro-Moscow Communist Party, Rakah) who unequivocally support a two-nation solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and recognise the PLO as the leadership of the Palestinian people'.

Peace Now consists of a larger circle of Israelis who 'are ready for peace and speak of a political rather than a military solution to the Palestinian problem. They will demonstrate against atrocities in Lebanon and repression in the occupied territories, but they will not speak publicly for a Palestinian state. The majority in Peace Now believes that to do so at this time could seriously split the movement.'

Nevertheless, Peace Now's accomplishments in mobilising Israeli opposition illustrate the capability of a highly motivated grass-roots movement. Lacking a formal structure, Peace Now relies on a fluctuating membership of 100 to 200 activists. 'The

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success of any demonstration depends completely on the people's mood at any particular moment,' insists Avneri. 'When I met Arafat in Beirut on 3 July, I was boasting that 50,000 people would turn up to a peace rally in Tel Aviv later that day. In fact, 100,000 people actually demonstrated.'

Because it acts as an umbrella organisation, Peace Now is much influenced by its most moderate members. As they are close to the national 'mainstream', they often moderate the tenor of any political action by Peace Now.

The final circle in the peace constellation consists of the 'dovish' sectors of the Labour Party, as well as various smaller parties which are still part of the political establishment. According to Avneri, 'they will not demonstrate without the approval of their party's leadership.'

When Israel's largest political demonstration of 400,000 people occurred in Tel Aviv last September, calling for a commission of enquiry into the Sabra and Chatila massacres, all the opposition forces had finally converged. 'Then, you had great masses of Israelis who were morally very profoundly shaken by events. Official Labour and Mapam support made it possible to bring in bus-loads of demonstrators from the *kibbutzim* and outlying development towns. A comparable rally in London over the Falklands war would have required six to seven million demonstrators.'

Despite his disappointment with the final resolutions of last month's PLO conference in Algiers, Avneri firmly believes that the peace forces in the Palestinian ranks have been disappointed by the lack of international response, particularly in the West. 'How long can the Palestinians support the moderate leadership that can't produce concrete results? Israeli contacts with the PLO began nine years ago when I met with the late Said Hammami in the Mount Royal Hotel in London. Until now, there has not been a single word of encouragement from America which constantly proclaims its desire for a peaceful solution to this conflict.'

Peace for Avneri is a dialectical process which also requires *Palestinian* encouragement for the struggle within Israel. 'When I met Arafat in Tunis on 18 January, I told him that the PLO can have a big influence on the Israeli peace movement by doing and saying positive things. Arafat has an acute grasp of the political situation within Israel and completely understood my argument.

'However, due to their many historical traumas, the Palestinians believe that an internal consensus based on organisational unity is mandatory for their political survival. As a result, the radical minority at Algiers were in a position to blackmail the conference from expressing more moderate resolutions on peace for fear of splitting the PLO.'

Given Begin's plans for rapidly absorbing the West Bank, Avneri warns that any available time is desperately short. 'Palestinians cannot afford to argue that they will only deal with non-Zionist Israelis. The latter could be assembled in a single telephone booth in London. This sort of obstructive thinking might have them waiting four or five generations, when there will be nothing left to negotiate.

'In the meantime, if we don't move forward, I believe there will be a catastrophic outburst throughout the Middle East. The Palestinians will accuse the Arab leadership of massive betrayal and incompetence and will put their energy into revolutionising the Arab world.

'As an Israeli, one of the worst scenarios I could imagine is to be surrounded by Khomeini-type regimes. The PLO are rational, political people, but who can negotiate with a Khomeini?' □

AUSTRALIA

Election time

Claudia Wright previews the policies of a Labor government

WITHIN AN HOUR of dissolving the Australian parliament, the Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, closed the electoral lists – thus preventing the registration of about 400,000 18-year olds, who had just reached the voting age. The young are not very fond of Fraser. Depriving them of the franchise is the sort of trick that has made him more generally disliked.

It will probably be Fraser's last hurrah. Half a billion dollars had fled the country by the last week of the campaign, indicating that Capital had lost confidence in Fraser's winning streak.

If the Australian Labor Party (ALP) wins with majorities in the House and Senate, then the first test of the new government will be how effectively it can keep Bob Hawke comfortable in the Prime Minister's spotlight, while the rest of the cabinet gets down to serious business.

There is the question, for example, of what to do about Mr Rupert Murdoch – a question that influences, not only the ALP's chances of surviving the first three years, but also the prospects for Australia's media industries and airline business. Hawke has met secretly with Murdoch at least once since the campaign started and, so far, the Murdoch papers have waged a war of mild bias against Labor, with a bet each way on the outcome. If the ALP cabinet were tough-minded enough, Murdoch could be neutralised, even turned into a reluctant ally. Much of the cashflow in his international empire and the solid coin in his bank rating spring from his airline, Ansett, whose operations duplicate the government-owned airline, TAA. Deregulation of the domestic airline industry would be a popular move in a country where internal air travel is prohibitively expensive – while such a move (or just the threat of it) could damage Murdoch's profits. A restructuring of the media monopolies along American lines would also hit Murdoch where he is vulnerable.

Then there is the question of what to do about the Reagan Administration. Australian knees turn to rubber when they step across the threshold of the White House, and the ALP will come into office with a shortage of tough international negotiators.

The umbilical cord is the US-Australian intelligence connection. Part of the power to control that will rest, if Labor wins, with Senator Gareth Evans. He could do a great deal by indirection – passage of a new Freedom of Information Act to oblige the foreign and defence ministries to open up their archives would provide a national shock every day for the next decade, transforming the country's national consciousness. If US farm interests dictate the ruin of Australian export opportunities, there is little Labor will be able to do about it.

Bill Hayden as foreign minister and Lionel Bowen as trade minister could stand up to the US. The new defence minister may not. Gordon Scholes – known as 'Cementhead' to his parliamentary detractors – isn't the man to insist on renegotiating, let alone disclosing, the secret agreements for US military bases in Australia.

A fundamental challenge for Australian defence and foreign policy lies not far ahead. Reagan Administration strategy has been to promote rearmament of Japan and the takeover by the Japanese military of 'defence' of the Pacific sealanes at least 1,000 miles to the south of the Japan Islands – in the direction of the Philippines. When the Filipino dictator Ferdinand Marcos dies, his wife Imelda will replace him. On Australian radio recently, Benigno Aquino (the exiled leader of the Filipino opposition) said that Imelda will not last long, and he predicts that she will be replaced by a civilian-military regime committed to evicting the Americans who made the Marcos dictatorship possible. If that were to happen, the Australian government would be faced with an expanding Japanese military presence, and a retreating American one – the parallels to the pre-1941 situation are too close for comfort. Canberra may then be obliged to beg, once again, for US military reinforcement – including nuclear weapons – on Australian territory, and to back a string of corrupt, murderous and unstable despots from Bangkok to Djakarta.

Can Hayden redirect Australian foreign policy – mending fences with Vietnam, China and India, and breaking with the ASEAN group's anti-Soviet obsessions – in time to block Japanese expansionism? If Hawke can be kept away from foreign policy, it's possible.

Similarly, if Hawke's involvement with women can be kept to the personal level, while education, family policy and social welfare are delegated (there are three possible women cabinet ministers), there is even the possibility that one of Australia's crassest male chauvinists will do more to advance Australian women's interests than the progressive, but ineffectual Whitlam.

Whitlam describes the picture differently. 'We used to have policies and no leader, and that didn't survive. Now we're trying a leader and no policies.' □

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BRETECHER

COMMON PROGRAMME

WOMEN AGAINST CRUISE
DROP MEN NOT THE BOMB
I tell you young woman, I'm a so-called object and proud of it... it's all a question of will-power
I pushed my husband and he became somebody but no-one's trying to... and I don't need your advice
well, I pushed my husband and he didn't get anywhere because he was a lazy swine do you think that's fair?
you just have to know who you choose
No... you have to have the power to choose
as though we have any choice... why do we have to listen to their drivel?
you know liz...
we're just not good enough at this
I was a feminist for four years and after four years my man left... so go screw yourselves
I mean surely there must be an answer to that
we're just not very good at it
If I was on the register I'd vote for them
mmm... or for the ecologists
your analysis deliberately ignores socio-revolutionary dialectic... stupid reactionary cows!
we're not good liz!
BRETECHER

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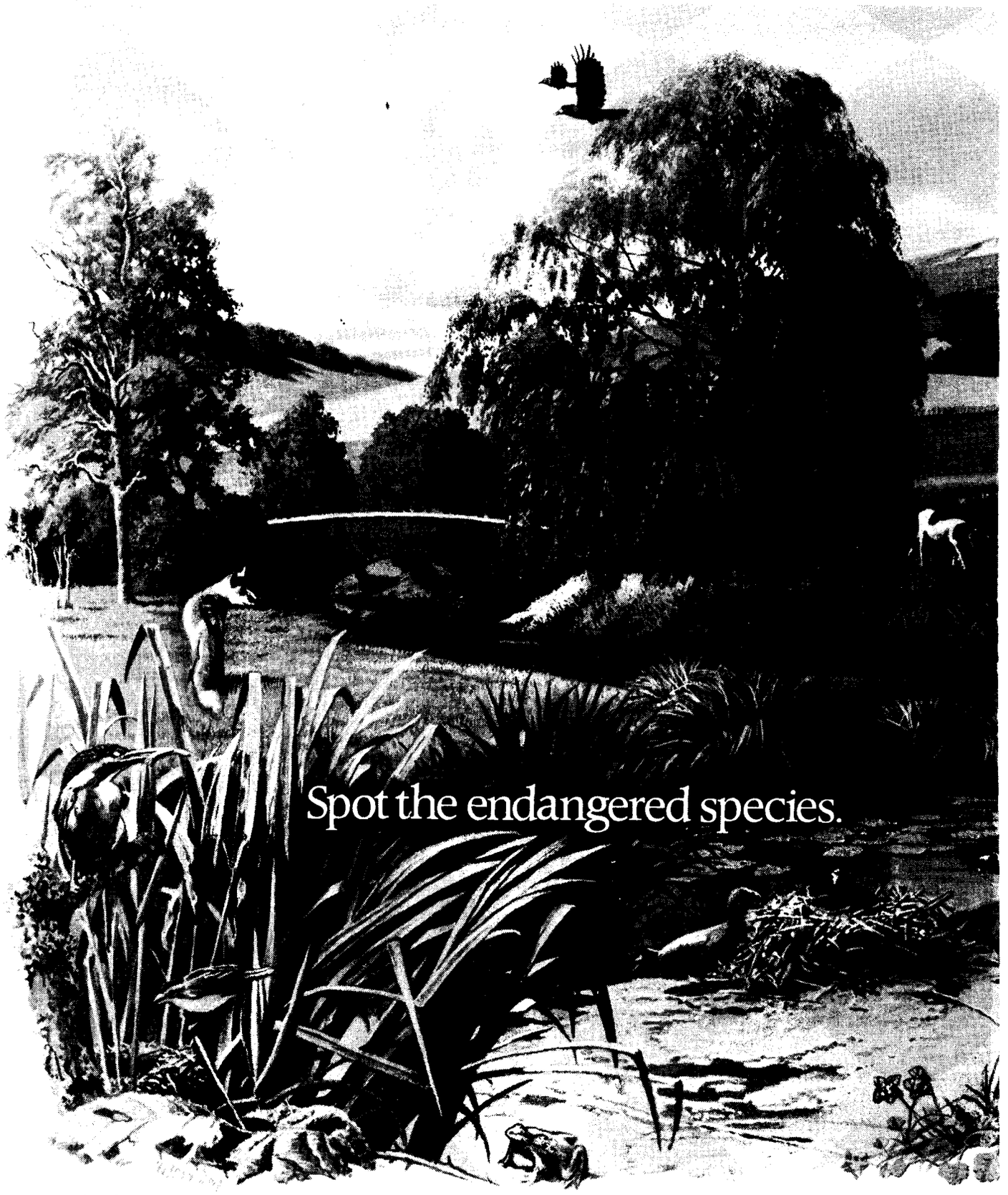

The fascinating little creature shown here in its natural habitat is the country bus.

And despite the fact that it's one of the country-dweller's best friends, things have become so bleak recently, it could be on the road to extinction.

Which is bad for the 40% of households in some remoter areas that don't own a car.

And bad for you if that 40% includes your own family, friends or employees.

How else will they get to work, to school or the shops?

Indeed, without buses, these services themselves could become threatened with social and economic consequences that don't bear thinking about.

Yet that is precisely what we should be doing.

Thinking.

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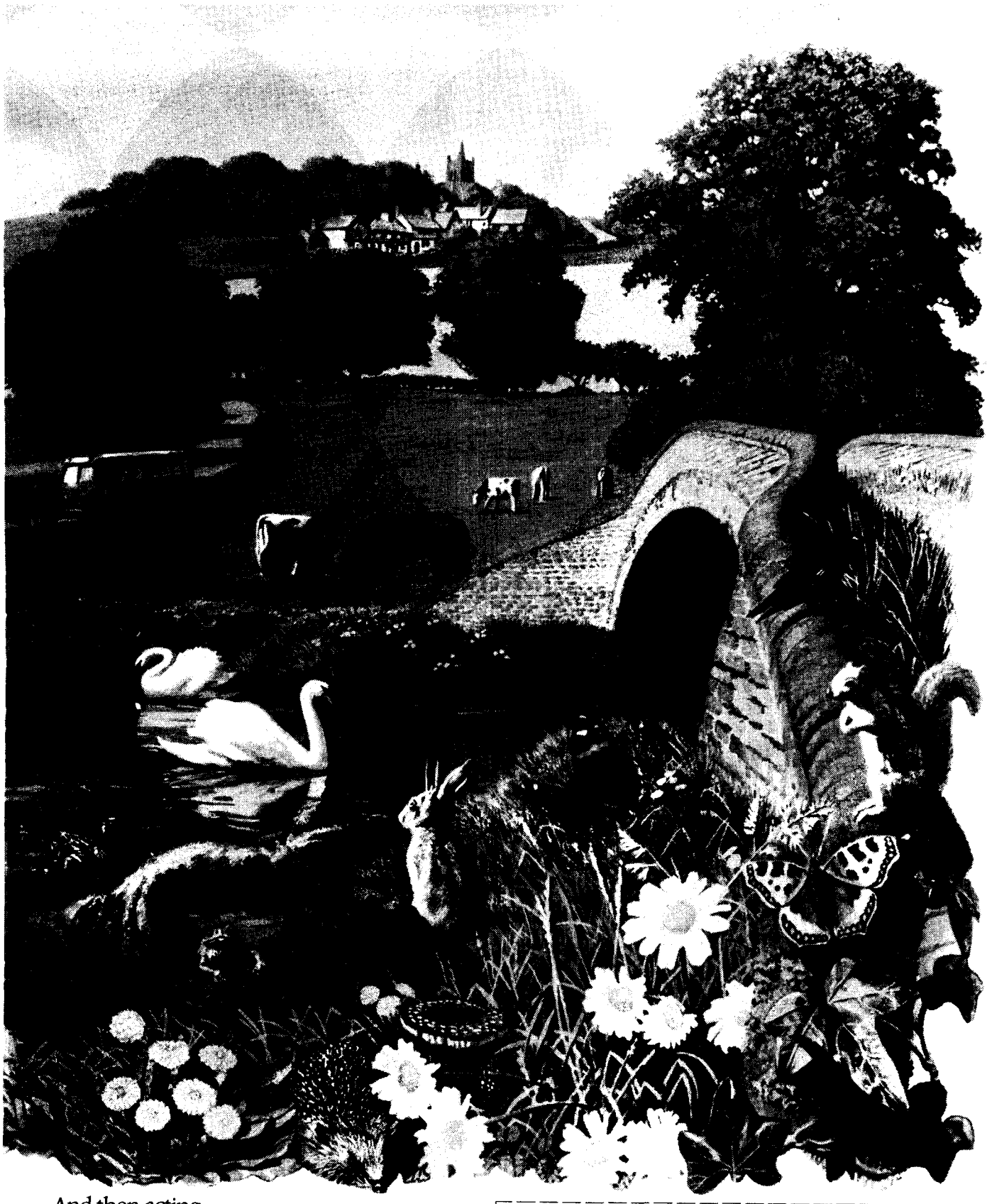

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LETTERS

Dirty jokes

Hilary Robinson, Glasgow

In reply to Anne Smith's article 'Dirty Joke' (NS 18 Feb): yes, of course there is absurdity in certain aspects of pornography, but whether it provokes laughter or not there are important issues to be raised about its existence and the form that it takes. Men are serious about pornography; because of the issues involved, we have to take it seriously as well.

Basically, pornography is a lie, and it is a lie that does violence to women, to our bodies and to our integrity. There is a sliding scale of 'acceptability' from page 3 and calendar pin-ups to (at the other end of the scale) the 'snuff' movies, where the woman involved really is snuffed, or killed. Wherever you stop on the scale, the lie is the same. It says that women are first and foremost fuck-objects; that sex is what the man does to us with his penis, with or without force; that the man is the active participant. It says that women's sexuality can be denied by physical means – 'softcore' pornography carries suggestions of bondage and violence with ankle-strap shoes, high-heels to hinder mobility, skipping ropes, choker necklaces and so on. It becomes more blatant further along the scale with gags, chains, handcuffs, etc, being used to render women immobile, silent, and terrified – some of the images are similar to those that Amnesty International have of torture victims.

Younger women, introduced to pornography by their boyfriends, may be told they're prudish if they are offended by it; they may lie back, pout and sigh, offer their rears, and then wonder why they don't get orgasms. Older women whose husbands use pornography will be made to feel even more inferior because they have the honourable marks of childbearing on their bodies, deemed to be flaws by the pornographers, and are past the age shown as being desirable (how many women look like the 'desirable' image anyway? A visit to a sauna or communal changing room shows how much of a lie that image is). In the agony column of *Woman* recently there was a letter from a woman whose husband watches pornographic videos at home and insists on trying out what he sees on her. Three out of four videos sold are pornographic. But it is not just 'other men' who use pornography; nice, leftish, so-called radical men use it too, shutting their eyes to the violence it does to women, shutting their eyes to the capitalist exploitation involved (here and in North America the pornography industry is bigger than the film and music businesses put together) – and they shut their eyes to how ugly it makes them.

Finally it must be stressed very strongly that many women now are speaking out against pornography not for puritanical reasons or because we believe that sex should only be linked with marriage and procreation. Instead, we want the emotional and physical space to explore and define our sexuality – a space and sexuality denied us by pornography. We want to live to capacity, we want to live without violence, and we say pornography is violence against women.

Foot faults

Hugo Young, Political Editor, Sunday Times

I don't suppose, in the light of events in the last week, that Peter Kellner would still wish to defend his contention (NS 25 Feb) that stories about the threat to Michael Foot's position as Labour Party leader were 'applied fantasy'. But a comment on his own working methods is called for.

He made the serious allegation that the *Sunday Times* political correspondent, Michael Jones, had imagined this story into existence, and invented a wholly false conclusion from conversation with a Labour MP. Kellner purported to know who this MP was, when the conversation had taken place, what was said and not said at it, and what was meant by what was said. However, he made no attempt to verify his story with either of the only two named persons in his piece, Michael Jones or Martin Kettle. Had he fulfilled this sound journalistic obligation – evidently long-forgotten since his days on this paper – he might have been deterred from making such an ass of himself, and getting his account so comprehensively wrong.

Peter Kellner writes: As my column last week made clear, I do not dismiss all accounts of dissatisfaction by Labour MPs of Michael Foot's leadership of the party. My specific point about the *Sunday Times* story was that the MP who recalled giving Michael Jones the quotation reported in the paper feels strongly that his position was misrepresented. Mr Young's letter does not refute that point; I stand by it.

Irish questions

Tom Paulin, English Dept., University of Nottingham

Henry Patterson (Letters 18 Feb) asks me to explain how the 'obstacle' to Irish unity will be removed. It will be removed when the British government withdraws the constitutional guarantee to Ulster unionism. When this happens, those 'influential' Independent Loyalists will no doubt improve their vote – at the moment they are in a minority, like all advanced thinkers.

The British government has now lost the will to remain in Northern Ireland and many politicians see the constitutional guarantee as the main obstacle to a settlement. Dr Patterson appears not to understand how the indifference of the British people to the Ulster situation – an indifference often tinged with contempt – is already affecting attitudes within the Loyalist camp. How much longer can Unionists live with the humiliating knowledge that Britain doesn't want them?

The importance of masks

Paul Jorion, University of Cambridge Department of Social Anthropology

In his letter (NS 25 Feb) Mr Mendoza raises a valuable question: why would the readers of the *New Statesman* want to know about an expensive and technical book devoted to the analysis of three masks of the North American Coast? The reason is that this book was written by Claude Lévi-Strauss whom the French in a recent poll regarded as their most powerful living thinker. Possibly, as Lévi-Strauss himself humorously remarked, because all better qualified candidates died recently.

Few people read Lévi-Strauss. Essentially, as I wrote in my review, professional anthropologists. As is the case with most famous thinkers, Lévi-Strauss is a myth. Nevertheless, this should not prevent a reviewer from depicting the line of argument of a book he reviews, however intricate it may seem to those who would not dream of reading such things. The question then is doing it properly. Maybe I should quote from another reader, the author of the book: 'Many thanks for your review where, as usual, you have managed to let the essential points emerge.' If Mr Mendoza had cared to pursue his reading he would have found out that even such high-flying issues are not entirely unconnected with the more essential task of 'giving Yosser a job'.

END's open letter

Ron Huzzard, Petts Wood, Kent

I was away in the USA for two weeks, thus letters from END supporters, in your issues of 4 and 11 February, have only just come to my attention. Almost all of them misinterpreted my view when I wrote in my individual capacity as a regular reader of the *New Statesman* since 1938. My religious affiliation, incidentally, was not referred to in my original letter (*NS* 27 Jan).

I must insist that I be permitted to put the record straight:

a) Of course I do not equate the status of Western and Eastern peace movements. However, with the threat of a nuclear holocaust we have to extend our main dialogue with peace organisations as they are, not as we would wish them to be. Surely that is the real implication of co-existence and détente.

b) The original aim of the 1980 END appeal was to bring together for urgent action those from all parts of Europe – West, East and neutral, who wished to promote nuclear-free zones and general nuclear disarmament. My understanding differs from Michael Barratt-Brown (Letters 11 Feb) who talks about 'a non-aligned movement.' I understood END's main aim was out to bridge the gap between East and West and end the cold war at least among nuclear disarmers.

c) It is not true that only pro-Soviet delegates were invited to the Soviet Peace Committee dialogue conference in Moscow on 26-29 January. It is deplorable that Michael Barratt-Brown failed to get his visa, but END too has excluded people from some of its own recent conferences in this country.

d) Your correspondent rightly mentions Poland, Afghanistan and human rights. To express our views on Soviet policy on these issues is one of the reasons for making increased contact with official bodies in Eastern Europe and inviting their representatives to Britain. However, the disarmament issue must stand on its own. It is the most urgent one where common action and agreement in East and West Europe is possible. The right to life itself and freedom from the threat of nuclear extinction is the most important human right of all. Yes, even more urgent than the political and economic differences that divide the communist and capitalist systems. Let us deal with these through other channels.

e) I am not an anarchist and there is nothing sacrosanct in being permanently non-aligned in relation to one's own government policies. I want to see a British Labour government led by Michael Foot fully implementing the 1982 annual conference unilateral disarmament policies of the party. In that situation I shall be fully aligned. On many recent disarmament initiatives I have no objection – to Soviet proposals including a nuclear freeze, no first use, a European zone free of battlefield weapons and a comprehensive test ban treaty. They are better than those coming from Reagan and Thatcher.

I plead with END and its supporters in the pages of the *NS* not to assume that they speak for all activists in the British or West European peace movements. The peace movement must eliminate from within itself the mentality of the cold war which has poisoned East-West relations in Europe since Churchill's Fulton Speech in 1946. If we allow ourselves to be divided on East-West lines our enemies will have won a major victory.

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David Caute

The ideas man

A Margin of Hope: An Intellectual Autobiography
IRVING HOWE *Secker* £10

Irving Howe is the American intellectual who most obviously should have edited the *New Statesman*. I. F. Stone was probably too radical; Murray Kempton too clever. Howe was born into a Jewish immigrant family in the East Bronx. The Depression brought poverty and the ruin of his father's small business. Trapped by sweat-shop labour, both his parents joined the picket lines during the garment workers' strike of 1933. 'In later years,' Howe writes, 'whenever I heard intellectuals of the Left or Right attack unionism, I would be seized by an uncontrollable rage . . .' Young Irving hurled himself into the socialist movement; doctrinaire, disputatious and feverish with Marxist idealism, he swam rapidly through the milky waters of Norman Thomas's Socialist Party and out into a storm in a teacup: Trotskyism.

The young Jews who embraced Stalinism or Trotskyism were in the main alienated from the religious core of the Jewish tradition, and yet, as Howe puts it, 'We had no choice but to remain Jews, except perhaps through devices too humiliating to consider. We held in contempt those Jewish academics and intellectuals who tried to pass themselves off as anything but what they were.' Howe recalls the impact of Sartre's essay, *Réflexions sur la question juive*, an existentialist response to the Holocaust. The authentic Jew, according to Sartre, 'is the one who asserts his claim in the face of the disdain shown him.'

HOWE'S Jewishness was most practically expressed in what he calls the 'editing-and-translating-Yiddish business,' an enterprise which brought him to eat blintzes at Steinberg's vegetarian restaurant with Isaac Bashevis Singer. He also earned 150 dollars a month as assistant to Hannah Arendt at Schocken Books:

> While far from 'good-looking' in any commonplace way, Hannah Arendt was a remarkably attractive person, with her razored gestures, imperial eye, dangling cigarette. 'Szee here,' she would declare with a smile meant to subdue and to solace, and then she'd race off into one of her improvisations . . . Her thought leaped and whirled, refusing familiar liberal and Marxist routines.

Later, when Arendt's book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* unleashed a bitter controversy by its excoriating attack on the passive collusion of the Jewish Councils with the Nazi exterminators, Howe's reaction was critical. A year later, meeting her at a party, he stretched out a hand in greeting. 'With a curt shake of the head and that bold, grim smile of hers, she turned on her heel and walked off.' At the end of a life, the cuts hurt more than the bruises.

Howe reports that 'the reconquest of Jewishness became an important project in my life', this involving 'a growth of feeling for the new state of Israel.' Ah! – the bone in the throat. Although he 'rejoiced' at Israel's victory in 1967, he makes no mention of the war of 1956 when Israel attempted to topple Nasser in murky collusion with Anglo-French imperialism – an awkward episode conveniently forgotten. Although recognising a genuine Palestinian 'problem', Irving Howe lapses into a deep and evasive silence concerning Israel's performance since the Six Day War – I am reminded of our own flinching from that other intractable problem, that other collision between two self-defining communities, Northern Ireland.

IT IS NOT, of course, comfortable for a New York Jew to speak out against Israel's policy of occupation, creeping annexation, harassment, expansion and bombing of a foreign capital, even if he simultaneously reaffirms, as Howe does, his commitment to Israel's right to exist within secure borders. Such a stance is likely to be a lonely one, subject to hectoring charges of betrayal, of latent anti-semitism, akin to the scattershot 'anti-Americanism' fired at critics of American policy in the Fifties. Tribal fractricide wounds and stings, splitting families and friends: 'You should be ashamed, to betray your own people.'

Since *A Margin of Hope* went to press, Irving Howe has indeed boldly criticised Israel's invasion of Lebanon, culminating in the massacre of Palestinians in Chatila and Sabra. The reaction was predictable, Pavlovian: according to the American Zionist President, Ivan J. Novick, Howe was 'willing to place Israel in jeopardy so that he can exercise the privilege of dissent in the safety of his intellectual retreat.' Criticism of the Begin Government, continued Novick, was tantamount to maligning the Jewish people in the eyes of the non-Jewish world.

Howe responded to this blind, Manichean tribalism with dignity:

> In Tel Aviv recently 400,000 people demonstrated against the Israeli authorities, especially Sharon, responsible for allowing Phalangist gunmen to enter the Palestinian camps and massacre helpless people. *There*, among those who want peace, not annexation, is the soul of Israel.

But I wonder – the final flourish is rhetorical; observing Israel's close ties with South Africa, black Africans may also wonder.

A Margin of Hope is subtitled 'An Intellectual Autobiography', which means that sex, money, ambition and the other deadly sins which make life worth living (and books worth reading) are scarcely mentioned. Irving Howe's personal life may have been a dull one; during World War II fate despatched him not among the naked and the dead, or from here to eternity, but up to Alaska to cool his heels and read Matthew Arnold in a refrigerated wilderness. Fate knows its man. Whereas Mailer will brashly place himself at the centre of any public drama, Howe is a reticent man, modest, even self-effacing. But virtue is no virtue in a writer; all too rarely does the author allow

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a raw nerve, a moment of genuine self-portraiture or intimate feeling, to interrupt his steady progress through the Great Issues of Our Time, from Trotskyism and *Partisan Review* to McCarthyism, the New Left and a final, nervous sniff at contemporary feminism.

When his marriage breaks up one is surprised to discover he was married. There are tantalising glimpses of the man behind the pundit: the approaching death of his father, or a period of lonely, alienated exile in California, but then Howe fastidiously retreats into the role of a faceless intelligence. Out comes the card index: 'I debated Herbert Marcuse . . . Another time I debated the Harvard historian Oscar Handlin . . . A third time I debated Howard Fast.' The camera tends to be set at middle-distance.

Even when ruminating about the magazine *Dissent*, very much a personal creation and dedication, Irving Howe seems overwhelmed by fair-mindedness, gently chiding enemies and thanking friends for helping out. Only when he gets to the manic Texan sociologist, C. Wright Mills, does his blood begin to pound and his prose take wing. As for the publication and critical reception of his own books, normally a tense if not traumatic moment in a writer's life, Howe reports their delivery with as much excitement as a hen laying her dozenth egg of the morning. But then comes a nice touch. His most recent book, *The World of Our Fathers*, a kind of Jewish *Roots* (though better), made the best-seller list. 'I had lived for years with the sacred persuasion that the poor sale of my books was a sign of virtue.'

What brings the lion out of his cage is not literature – the author of *Politics and the Novel* is disappointingly silent about contemporary fiction – nor his admiration for Orwell and Edmund Wilson, nor even McCarthyism, against which he took a typically principled stand; what sets the adrenalin pumping is Howe's own generational conflict with the SDS and the New Left during the 1960s. The wounding attacks of the young radicals got under his skin; he felt that they were determined 'to deny our past, annul our history, wipe out our integrity.' Rather snidely he adds that if he had sought juvenile or fashionable popularity, he would have chosen the road of Marcuse or Chomsky. When his old friend Philip Rahv savaged him in print, Howe felt personally betrayed. No doubt Hannah Arendt had felt the same.

Howe's scorn for the New Left was due, in my view, to a failure of the imagination. How could they not realise that there can be no 'participatory democracy' without 'representative democracy'? How could they talk of stopping troop trains or forcibly invading the corridors of power? Who had given them a mandate? Where would it stop? What about the rule of law (a quote from Orwell here)? Obsessed by the lessons of history, or their own history, Irving Howe and his colleagues wanted to demonstrate against the Vietnam war yet shrank from marching, shoulder to shoulder, with young activists high on dangerously romantic delusions.

Howe was right, of course, but he was also wrong. Right in the sense that Black Power, Student Power or Woman Power are, as he says, phases of the endless game of finding substitutes for the proletariat. But wrong because social democratic, coalition politics requires a viable party, and in America there was none. Wrong, because the politics of hope is existential as well as programmatic, therapeutic as well as instrumental. Having studied Malraux, Howe should know that. What permitted the two generations in Europe to coalesce, however chaotically, was a willingness to reconceive a humane Marxism. Without that, hope is not even marginal. □

BIOGRAPHY
Michael Heffernan

Mirror images

Ingmar Bergman: A Critical Biography
PETER COWIE *Secker* £12.50

A biography of Bergman is announced. At once I am 15 years younger. The tube stations are clean, the theatres open, the centre of Coventry a cause of architectural optimism; only the occasional, sour, academic voice complains of half a million out of work. At the Academy cinema, *Persona* (still, surely, Bergman's masterpiece) arrives to disturb and to stimulate us students of *The Divided Self* and austere citizens of Habitat and the Royal Court. Already *Wild Strawberries* and *The Silence* have become minor classics.

Looking at the stills in Peter Cowie's liberally illustrated book, one can recover not only the peculiar atmosphere, at once cold and seductive, which suffused Bergman's Sixties films; there returns a sense of shock and puzzlement. These works somehow touched on familiar, close experience, yet more than one critic found them 'difficult'. Their consistent use of the most personal modes of symbolism, the condensed and disorderly mechanisms of dreams, left even the art-house audience perplexed. There was a code to be cracked in these intense reflections of our lives, and we were grateful for the steady publication of Bergman's scenarios, his own essays and interviews, and one or two excellent critical studies (an essay by Susan Sontag from *Sight and Sound* is still a landmark).

Over the years, of course, all has changed. The *enfant terrible* of the Swedish theatre in the Forties and Fifties has become an international celebrity, a man of many marriages and love affairs; and the 'difficulty' has evaporated with time. As we wait for *Fanny and Alexander* (which Bergman has announced will be his last film) to open in London, we are hardly expecting to struggle with its meaning. The extent of our change of mood, or simply our familiarity with the idiom, finds its measure in Peter Cowie's 'critical biography', the first attempt in English at a full account of Bergman's life to date.

Peter Cowie is the publisher of the International Film Guide and the only foreign member of the Swedish Film Institute's Awards Jury. Both activities make their mark on his book. The films and plays he describes have been pierced by the sharp gaze of archivist and panel-member judge, and the overall effect is of a list, each scenario summarised and each production succinctly assessed. Indeed, the most useful section of the book is the filmography at the end. Cowie's Swedish connection has been important in bringing together Bergman's films with his enormous output as a stage director (and, in earlier days, playwright). For over 20 years, he worked several months of each year in the theatre, making films as opportunities arose; his appointment in 1963 as head of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm would have been justified regardless of his international standing in the cinema.

A critical biographer needs to do more than accumulate facts and story-lines. Cowie's method is to move from one production to the next, squeezing broad moral themes from Bergman's characters, and loosely connecting them to events in his life, particularly childhood traumas. Apart from occasional anecdotes gathered from Bergman's colleagues, Cowie rarely explores beyond his subject's account of events or their significance. The book follows the surface of life: when dealing with Bergman's early career, the years of searching for a happy match of theme and style, Cowie appears at sea among the disconnected facts and opinions he has assembled. One moment he quotes Truffaut with approval to the effect that Bergman's women are the true characters in his films, and a few pages later tells us it is the male characters who carry the burden of the director's thoughts in the early work. As Bergman grows more assured, so does Cowie; his accounts of the later films are livelier and more profound. Weak in critical imagination, he lacks a biographer's curiosity, the wish to be outside and inside his material at once, an eye for the relevant detail, a feel for the texture of an artist's life.

It may be perverse to speculate whether Bergman, whose co-operation is acknowledged, might not feel best served by a biographer so respectfully bland. For wasn't one of the sources of the difficulty critics had with his work in the Sixties precisely the relationships, partial and ironic, between film, performer and audience which his work evoked but also explored?

Cowie makes much of the use of mirrors in *Persona*, both symbolically in its story of confused identity, and as an expression of the complex process of creating and watching a film – a theme Bergman makes explicit in the movie's presentation. The image in a mirror enriches me, for it allows me to see what, by definition, is normally invisible, my own face. But the mirror image is an impoverished one, because it is unreal; with or without it I shall never see my own face as I can see my friend's. The image on the cinema screen presents similar, though not identical, issues for those

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involved in producing and experiencing it. How quickly we forget the illusory nature of a film.

The aesthetic questions thrown up by these observations have been the meat and drink of film theorists, and many film-makers, for the last 15 years, and it is no wonder that Bergman's have ceased to rank as 'problem' films. What is a reflection if it is not a mask? What is a biography if it is not, as Barthes quipped, 'a novel that dares not speak its name'? These are some of the puzzles which might naturally preoccupy Bergman's biographer. Peter Cowie writes as if oblivious to the ambiguity or potential of his material. While it records all the major events of Bergman's life, the book communicates no sense of a living man. □

FEMINISM
Monica Furlong

A new voice

A Map of the New Country: Women and Christianity
SARA MAITLAND *Routledge* £9.95 & £4.95

The Church was the last of the great institutions to remain ignorant of feminism. Until the Seventies (and maybe until now) not only did it retain its sexist assumptions and sexist language intact, but it resisted even the knowledge that it made a poor showing in its attitude to women – it remained sublimely indifferent to the fact that there was even a problem. In 1979 a group of American nuns at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC invited Pope John Paul II to 'be mindful of the intense pain and suffering which is part of the life of many women', and to allow 'the possibility of women as persons being included in all the ministries of the church'. He ignored the outburst and went on with his preplanned speech, while one sister after another rose to her feet in silent protest. Either in bewilderment, or simply hoping that the spectre of indignant womanhood would go away, Pope John Paul did what many another church leader has done before and since.

In the Church of England attempts to introduce feminist insights produce chidings about 'divisiveness', and any protest automatically evokes the adjective 'strident'. (Black people in the United States who objected to being pushed around used to be known as 'uppity'. Women are 'strident'.)

Even the Free Churches, who are supportive of women to the extent of making them ministers, discriminate against them in other ways – the book tells of a Baptist woman minister forced to give up her pension rights on marrying and 'everywhere women ministers face longer periods of unemployment, lower salaries, less opportunity to shoulder full responsibility and less likelihood of appointment or selection to leadership positions within ecclesiological structures.' Even where ministry is not in question women tend to get excluded from positions of leadership because of the rooted clericism of all the churches. The Methodist Pauline Webb is quoted – 'The reason why we have never had a woman president is because the president is always a minister – even though there is no reason why it should be.'

In this beautifully researched and intelligent book Sara Maitland has mined jewels of interesting material about women in the churches. She tells the extraordinary history of the missionary societies, many of them founded by women desperately trying to find a role for themselves within the churches, and often subsequently annexed by men. She looks at the very interesting history of women's organisations within the churches, using two of them – the Women's Guild of the Church of Scotland and the Episcopal Church Women of the USA – for detailed study. She shows how on the one hand church organisations were a godsend for intelligent women otherwise allowed to be little but domestic toys – they learned how to handle money, how to speak in public, how to take part in meetings. All such organisations, however, have had a hard fight (the Scots are still at it, it seems) to free themselves from clerical domination, and to retain the right to dispose of their own funds.

One of the most interesting chapters of the book – Women in the Bureaucracies – shows how sexism operates within the office structures of the churches. It is devastating about the way Church House, the bureaucracy of the Church of England, hides how it relegates women to secretarial and cleaning jobs by claiming to operate Civil Service methods (in themselves sexist).

Is the Maitland picture one of total gloom? Far from it, because, in a growing awareness of their own power, Christian women have begun to work together with a new energy and high spirits. In radical Christian feminist groups, in resource groups, in peace groups, in house Eucharists, in drama, in workshops, in groups working for women's ordination, in amazing conferences like a recent (oversubscribed) one on 'Women, Men and Power', women and some men are engaged on a bold and exciting critique of their Christian beliefs, touching on sexism, sexuality, their relation to the churches, and much else. These encounters are often multi-denominational – women are more impatient than men of denominational niceties – and a new voice, growing stronger with use, begins to be heard in them.

Sara Maitland, who minds a great deal about the exclusion of women in the churches, does not want women to be ordained, partly because she fears they will get drawn into the clericism of the status quo, partly because (quoting Mary Daly) she says it would be like black people deciding to join the leadership of the Ku Klux Klan. Perhaps because I belong to an organisation working hard to get women ordained I find this tricksically highminded on the one hand, and scaringly paranoid on the other.

I prefer another insight of the book. The Body of Christ, says the writer, is a pregnant body, pregnant with new birth. Throughout history, one group after another, often a despised group, representing the Other, have been midwives to new birth. 'Now it is women who after centuries of repression (of talents, symbols, values and authority) are demanding their place in the body that sought to exclude them. The demand that women are making of their churches and of the world is . . . the prophetic voice crying in the wilderness for a return to God, to adventure and to hope.' □

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My Wife Maria Callas
G. B. MENEGHINI *Bodley Head* £9.95
The Callas Legacy
JOHN ARDOIN *Duckworth* £9.95

Goaded beyond endurance by the dismissive claims of journalists and socialites that he was a dolt, Signor Meneghini wrote this defiant book and proves them right. A wealthy businessman, he married Maria Callas, who was 30 years his junior, as her career began, and was her husband and manager until 1959, when she left him for Onassis.

In this obtuse but vain performance, Meneghini sets out to prove not that he loved her, but that she loved him, and quotes innumerable love letters to support his case. It seems probable, from his account, that for many years they were close and that he managed her affairs astutely. But by 1959 she had in many ways outgrown him and so she left him. It's not hard to see why. In a photograph taken on board Onassis's yacht, a smiling, relaxed Onassis is seen teasing Elsa Maxwell while behind him stands the truculent figure of Meneghini, bearing an unfortunate resemblance to Mussolini. Almost by his own admission, Meneghini was humourless; he quotes from a letter Callas wrote an ex-boyfriend, 'Please excuse the change in my nature, but Battista doesn't like it when I tell jokes.' The miracle is that she put up with him for 12 years.

The book's slender value rests in Meneghini's defence of Callas against the often spiteful legends that grew up around her. She was clearly a proud and difficult woman, and had every right to be, but she had to endure much contemptible behaviour from opera house directors and rival singers. Meneghini's righteous indignation is undermined, though, by accounts of his own intrigues, such as when he manipulated the Metropolitan Opera into firing Callas so that she could be free to accept more lucrative engagements elsewhere.

This needlessly intimate and defensive biography, like its predecessors, tends to obscure the fact that Maria Callas was more than the sum of her temperamental parts. She was also the greatest dramatic singer of this century, and it's a relief to turn to John Adroin's revised edition of his invaluable survey of all her recordings, including precious priate recordings of some of her greatest performances. Ardoin's book is short on gossip, but first-rate on Callas's srtistry, and that's what matters.

Stephen Brook

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Desertification
ALAN GRAINGER *Earthscan* £3

There have always been deserts. But now they are spreading at a rate of 80,000 square miles (almost the area of the UK) a year into arid and semi-arid lands, as the result of over-use of land, poor irrigation and the removal of forests. Since the Sahel disaster a decade ago, which led the UN to recommend action and investment to halt desertification, little has happened to preserve the threatened areas in 100 of the world's 150 countries. Grainger's book makes a good job of telling 'How people make deserts, how they can stop and why they don't.'

The problem is one which can be approached only by transfusions of money and political will. As Grainger says, the technical means to prevent desertification are well known. There is little mystery about planting trees or improving irrigation. But the people who live in arid lands are poor and powerless. As the deserts spread they become even more so. So even the countries affected tend not to take desertification seriously. At this rate a *third* of the world's arable land will be gone by the end of the century, to join the deserts of North Africa, large parts of which were once the granary of the Roman Empire. Turning back the new kingdoms of sand and salt which are forming ought to be well worth while. Lost agricultural production through desertification is costing $26 billion a year. Every year that passes adds to the total and makes the task of reclaiming the land larger.

Martin Ince

The Spanish Civil War
DAVID MITCHELL *Granada* £9.95

This excellent introduction to the Spanish Civil War is based on the recent Channel 4 series (though it can be appreciated entirely separately) and is packed with relevant, absorbing photographs as well as containing numerous quotations from eye-witnesses. David Mitchell clearly identifies the events leading up to 18 July 1936 when the insurgents rose against the Republican government. In order to understand the basis of popular support for the Republic and its achievement in creating an army with little foreign hardware, it is useful to examine, as David Mitchell does, the evidence of peasant deprivation in the 19th and 20th centuries. 'Spain's standard of living was so low, roughly the same as Morocco or an African nation nowadays', comments one of his informants.

Mitchell traces both the 'International Civil War' and the two Spains – Francoist and Republican. The divisions within the Nationalist and Republican causes were as important as the actual war between them. Central to the Nationalist cause was the belief that they were fighting a crusade. As the nun Cristana de Artega says, 'It was natural to support an army fighting for religion and faith.' Yet Carlists, Falangists, Monarchists, Generals and Church dignitaries distrusted each other and some Falangists even discussed the possibility of kidnapping Franco.

Republican unity was made precarious by resisting Soviet domination. 'Peasants and industrial workers were busy making their revolution . . . improvised union and party militias were having little or no success in the battlefield.' However, there were considerable challenges to the taboos of an intensely conservative country: 'revolutionary weddings', legalised abortions, the demand for an end to sexual harassment at work and widespread collectivisation, all featured in Republican Spain.

Franco's war aim was not so much to defeat armies as to conquer territory, 'accompanied by the necessary purges. Memories of the bitter divisions that split the nation are still a factor in Spain's stormy transition to democracy today.'

Richard Evans

Capitalism and the Construction of Old Age
CHRIS PHILLIPSON. *Macmillan* £12.50 & £4.95

Back in the last slump, when the TUC wanted early retirement to give younger workers a chance, official propaganda emphasised the sickness, inefficiency and unadaptability of their elders. During the full employment of the 1950s, the talk was all of their reliability, commitment and experience, and we learned from a spate of studies how retirement must lead to despair. Now that we live with not just another mass unemployment but a dramatically ageing population, Chris Phillipson's short, sharp analysis of just how deeply attitudes to elderly people are shaped by economic conditions comes most timely to balance the alarmist hand-wringing of social planners and warn against easy assumptions that adequate services will emerge if only we have more government aid, support for families and voluntary help.

As he persuasively shows, we need to look far more deeply than that into the way ageism – a double discrimination against a group made up mostly of women – permeates both our thinking and our professional practice. The persistence of poverty as an 'inevitable' accompaniment of old age, the low status of geriatric medicine, the unwillingness of social workers to exchange creative energy with the people who form the bulk of their department's clientele, the reluctance of academic sociologists to tangle with these issues are all here documented to bear witness to that.

On ways ahead, Phillipson is less clear. He's right to see in the current emphasis on volunteerism a new blackmail for the younger retired to spend their energy on their elders. He can find little evidence from either Russia or China to posit an alternative to capitalism's constructs. He draws some hope from American political and self-help organisations among elderly people and anecdotal encouragement from their few echoes here.

But it's in the force of his analysis of how old age has become a 'burden' to both the individuals concerned and the rest of us that he offers his best starting point for all our futures. The best contribution social workers could make, he reckons, is to help elderly people escape the myth of their 'inevitable' decline by seeing exactly how that decline is fostered by economic and social policies. And not just social workers.

Ann Shearer

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FICTION
Harriett Gilbert

Stomaching it

Ararat
D. M. THOMAS *Gollancz* £6.95
A Visit from the Footbinder
EMILY PRAGER *Chatto* £7.95 & £3.50
Adam, One Afternoon
ITALO CALVINO *Secker* £7.95

Those who enjoyed D. M. Thomas's last novel will be upset by **Ararat.** For what allowed *The White Hotel* to survive the charges of plagiarism (not to mention feminist unease at the book's profound sado-masochism) was the merciful illusion it gave to its readers that, however horrible, the 20th century made sense. The illusion was, of course, no more than that. The equation of our subconscious violence with the holocaust we were forced to confront when the Nazi regime was 'analysed' had all the useless symmetry of tautology. Thomas himself must have seen this. His latest novel expends its energy, not in adding up – making sense – but in avoiding the slightest implication that *x* might equal anything.

The story begins with a Russian poet having sex with a blind woman fan. Disappointed by the woman's legs, he avoids prolonging their sexual proximity by offering to tell an improvised story, and asking the woman to suggest a theme. 'Improvisation', she says, 'that's your theme.' Thus begins a series of boxes within boxes – or, at least, a collection of boxes. Despite some sort of a narrative structure, in which a mishmash of feverish poets (a real Pushkin; a fictitious Surkov; even, implicitly, a real Thomas) travels from Russia to Armenia (en route, they/he do a bit more fucking and are entertained, from time to time, by a man who appears to have taken part in every Nazi atrocity), any attempt on the part of the reader to understand precisely *which* poet is improvising a tale about which is frustrated, as in an Escher drawing, by perceptual inconsistencies. Even Mount Ararat, the story's resolution, turns out to be, not one mountain, but two.

This book is quite as unpleasant as *The White Hotel*. Its itineraries of torture, rape and mass murder have all the compulsive, alienated feel of the nastiest sort of pornography. I would, however, challenge the attacks that are now being levelled at Thomas's good faith. Early in *Ararat*, there is this exchange between (one of) the poet(s) and his/their doctor:

> 'Sometimes I can't help being others, I can't help becoming others. Everyone, everything. Not a sparrow falls without my knowing about it and suffering its death.'
>
> 'Ah, that's from the Bible!', she said, smiling . . . 'I could give you tranquillizers, but it's not really an answer, is it?'
>
> We were silent, looking at each other helplessly.

How do we approach, in a novel or elsewhere, the helplessness of an Armenian woman raped 'if attractive', then mutilated, then thrown in a pit to die – or the helpless ness of us who live on, while such things are still taking place?

Thomas appears to have found the obsessive's answer – regurgitating detail after detail to make the guilt easier to stomach. Others have condensed the horrors of history into pill-like symbols. American writer Emily Prager has concentrated on two of these in her first collection of stories,

Dennis O'Driscoll

Entries

Open the hall door
and let the year's first sunlight in,
picking its way through coal seams of darkness:
a gleaming copper hot-water pipe;
a bale of wheaten straw;
a hose of light drenching our chambered mound.

Hard green supermarket pears are ripening on the window-sill.
One blackbird still gives preference to our cul-de-sac.
Bedroom-pink cherries and scented hawthorn talc are visible
after steam baths of fog and rain,
only a slight eye-shadow cloud
now smudged under sun.

Bad pennies, earth's small change,
the dandelions are scattered everywhere.
Hatching buds burst into song
and the sun slips in through the front door
restoring our storm-battered house,
converting it into a holiday home.

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A Visit from the Footbinder. Even before it was over, the war in Vietnam had begun to represent all Western imperialist aggression – or, to a number of feminists, all *male* imperialist aggression; while the ritualistic crippling and deforming of upper-class Chinese girls has long ago shifted from being an example to being a metaphor for women's oppression. Prager approaches these icons via comedy. There is nothing intrinsically outrageous in this – it may, indeed, be the only sane route – but there is something worrying, nonetheless, in her tale of an all-woman combat troop luring 'gooks' into 'raping' them, in order to kill them with the devilishly cunning Lincoln-Pruitt Anti-Rape Device.

The trouble is, Prager keeps pulling back from the edge. By refusing to state unequivocally that *all* men deserve violent death, she turns her choice of the Vietcong, as victims, into a tacit acceptance of the racism expressed by the rest of the war. Stylistically, too, by retreating from total bad taste, by stepping back into harbours of 'reasonable' feminism, she forces us to react to her story seriously. Seriously, it is ill-conceived and naive.

The title story is not quite that, but falls between so many stools – social satire, realism, fable – that the genuine horror of the footbinding ceremony loses itself in the confusion. It is the shorter, more personal stories that finally redeem this collection – the reunion of school friends to test the truth of the penis-envy theory; the woman stuck in a taxi with agoraphobia; the couple trying to have a row in New York's Russian Tea Room. With a confidence and wit not evident before, these describe, with vicious precision, the emotional mutilation of women forced, by men, to 'be women'.

The Second World War in Italy is Italo Calvino's war – one of starving civilians, partisans, traitors. It permeates the stories of **Adam, One Afternoon** – a book first translated into English in 1957 and now reissued in the same superb translation. Unlike Calvino's more recent work, these stories are quite traditional, maintaining a respectable distance between the reader and the author. Already, however, Calvino is playing with fairy tales – his writing refined, impersonal, formal; his frame of reference extending beyond the 'human' to the 'natural' and 'animal' worlds. Even in the urban comedies there is a sensuality, a comedy less of 'manners' than of 'life', that gives both weight and depth to his slightest anecdote. By accepting that beauty co-exists with cruelty, absurdity with dignity, tragedy with farce, Calvino does more than refuse to judge – he indicates one possible way we might learn to live with ourselves. □

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The Jazz Couriers
TUBBY HAYES/RONNIE SCOTT
Jasmine JASM 2004
Freebop
JOHN STEVENS *Affinity AEE 101*

Camera Press

Tubby Hayes

The closest that most of us will ever get to the emotional traumas of a civil war came at the time of Suez – and, for jazz *aficionados*, a few years earlier, when supporters of Traditionalism were openly at odds with upholders of the Modern tendency. Class played a minor yet intriguing part in both encounters. A sizeable slab of working-class opinion certainly rallied behind our boys as the grey ships cut through the Mediterranean. But it was prosperous working-class youths – predominantly male, shorthaired, neatly suited – who packed into the Flamingo or the Johnny Dankworth Club to hear the latest thing. Meanwhile, at the Ken Colyer Club, just round the corner from Leicester Square station, those dancers looping their arms in the air, as if prancing round a maypole, were likely to be middle-class art students, or at least intellectuals manqué – much hairier, clad with the uniformity of the lackadaisical.

Nothing very significant can be drawn from that bit of amateur if first-hand sociology. A few years later half the nation could recognise Acker in his bowler. They watched bands dressed as Confederate soldiers or riverboat gamblers, drooled over banjo solos and responded to the vigour – if not the subtlety – of music that had once belonged to New Orleans streets and dance-halls. At about the same moment the audience for modern jazz was dividing within itself. Individual listeners began to draw the line: not accepting Coltrane, being upset by Ornette, ignoring – as every generation does – the acid truth that no art form stays the same for ever.

The appearance of four LPs from the old Tempo catalogue, a label once devoted to British modern jazz, complete with sleeves that are faithful facsimiles of the originals, poses an opportunity for gazing back at the happenings of around a quarter of a century ago. Jazz then was very precise, aware of its boundaries, without the kind of overlapping that seems commonplace today. Bill Haley had just brought his Comets to Britain, but the only hint on these LPs of a shift in popular culture was the early departure from one session of the drummer Tony Crombie, off to appear in Ilford with his Rock 'n' Roll Rockets (Crombie's defection, incidentally, was greeted by much tut-tutting from higher-minded musicians and fans). But perhaps the biggest contrast with present day attitudes was the unquestioning acceptance of American musicians as both inspirers of styles and touchstones of technical goodness or badness. That helped to give Victor Feldman his special status: when Feldman recorded *Transatlantic Alliance* and *In London* he was on holiday, back home after spending 12 months in the United States working in Woody Herman's band.

By 1957 the 22-year deadlock between the Musicians' Union and the American Federation of Musicians had been resolved. American groups were beginning to tour (Count Basie, the Gerry Mulligan Quartet and the MJQ all came over that year). Yet the mystique remained intact. Not until British musicians started working alongside Americans, in fact, especially in clubs like Ronnie Scott's, did they really accept that their heroes could have off-days too. By this time, anyway, some British players were already beginning to achieve parity with the better, if not the best, Americans. Feldman's various skills – on vibraharp, piano, drums (as a child prodigy during the war he had been billed as 'the kid Krupa') – were obvious enough. So was that of the trumpet players, Jimmy Deuchar (on *Transatlantic Alliance*, characteristically enough, he elected to play two numbers – 'Wail' and 'Wailing Wall' – associated with his idol, Fats Navarro) and the slightly more erratic but even more original West Indian, Dizzy Reece.

But the new-found confidence of British jazz was expressed most forcibly by the bulldog image of Tubby Hayes, marvellously dextrous, with genuine authority in his sound and phrasing (the occasions when he merely 'ran the changes', literally letting his fingers call the tune, were part of the price

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that has to be paid for a virtuoso approach). Hayes turns up on all four Jasmine LPs, but most definitively as co-leader (the other was Ronnie Scott) of the Jazz Couriers, a group that borrowed a little of the aggressiveness – and an echo of the name – of Art Blackey's Jazz Messengers, and, a couple of years later, in front of his own quartet.

In both instances, the rhythm sections – always looked on as the weakest link in British jazz of the 1930s and 1940s – now sound much more effective than they did at the time. John Stevens, a drummer of a slightly later generation, suggests that this phenomenon was the result of contemporary listeners always expecting to hear something corresponding to the currently fashionable American sound (similar qualms were felt between the wars about the guitar-packed and drumless Quintet of the Hot Club of France). Restrospective listening allows British rhythm sections to be accepted on their own terms. Phil Seamen, of course, even in his lifetime, was recognisably a drummer of world class, perhaps the first non-American to be so. It's a pity that the late 1950s recording does not always do justice to the delicacy of his cymbal work.

Tubby's Groove represents a high point in that phase of British jazz which sprang from bebop. It was recorded in December 1959, just on the brink of a new decade, musically as well as historically. Within six months John Coltrane would form his first quintet. Meanwhile Miles Davis's use of modes on his *Kind of Blue* LP already indicated what lay ahead. By the end of the 1960s a new generation of British jazz players would be installed, none of them quite so dependent upon American models or material. Mike Westbrook arrived from Plymouth, bringing John Surman with him, and was soon busy composing extended orchestral pieces. Free players foregathered at the Little Theatre Club, high up among the chimneys above St Martin's Lane (the shrewder regulars made a point of arriving slightly late – to avoid helping to shift the piano on-stage).

John Stevens, one of the pioneers of this freer jazz, was a huge admirer simultaneously of Phil Seamen and of Tubby Hayes. Indeed, before those two musicians died, he had persuaded them to join an occasional group, Splinters, which also included Stan Tracey, and in which, to shuffle metaphors slightly, the Young Turks combined with the Establishment. Exactly the same reasoning lies behind *Freebop*, which has the pianist Gordon Beck and the alto saxophonist Peter King, both very distinguished but slightly more formal improvisers, standing toe to toe with Jon Corbett (trumpet), Paul Rutherford (trombone), Jeff Clyne (bass) and, of course, Stevens himself. Trying to unite the tightest of jazz disciplines with the loosest sounds like the ultimate paradox. But jazz history is crammed with paradoxes and Stevens's ecumenical gesture – keeping jazz rhythms, using motifs and melodies but jettisoning those rows of chords – works at least enough of the time to justify itself. And it also implies a more peaceable and creative relationship between present and past than ever seemed likely in the partisan 1950s. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Low snoops

THE FRENCH call video *image de synthèse,* a better name for that dead-looking stuff, which stands as close to reality and beauty as a photostat would to the Mona Lisa. The whole 'video revolution' seems to be a gigantic technological breakthrough in reverse, which I welcome. Ever since William Boyd pointed out how bright and shiny people's hair looks as lit for video, these strangely sparkling hairstyles have been reviving my all-too-suspended disbelief in everything I see on television. Thanks to Boyd, I am beginning to see how perfectly those tragic top-knots correspond to the ghastly symetry, stuffed jokes, twee plots and ten-year-old West End playwrighting clichés, complete with flared trousers, that are presented as made-for-TV fiction. I don't know anyone who behaves like people do on television, unless it is a special kind of defunct actor who opens supermarkets. People simply don't behave so *sincerely* in real life. They are usually thinking about something else in my experience. Bring back *Candid Camera!*

Video is certainly good for mildly pornographic snooping, as when **TV-AM** sent a rude American into the home of absent celebrity Fred Housego, who was then forced to watch his own crucifixion in the studio with us afterwards. 'These little Edwardian places used to be thought rather common', went the American, 'now they have a certain kitsch amusement value, with their stained glass sunsets and everything.' Fred's hall, crammed with fine old books, he found 'zany', probably belonging to a man with suede shoes. (Fred drove taxis till he won *Mastermind.*)

A furry lime-green lamp with orange-flowered shade was thought to be excruciating and the antimacassars matching the imitation William Morris wallpaper were an embarrassing throwback, lacking imagination. The kids' teddies were 'wonderful', but badly dressed. I was holding my breath in the hope that we would all creep upstairs into the awful bedroom, but this was downstairs breakfast television and Mr & Mrs Housego were already up and in the studio ready to face their riveted new public. 'The lamp haunts us,' said Fred, lamely Judasing a friend, 'it was a present.' Apart from that, they didn't have a leg to stand on.

Another low snoop (on BBC-2's **Arena**) was into William Burroughs' nasty flat, a windowless ex-YMCA locker-room on the Bowery. 'I am against all forms of violence', sneered the yellowing Burroughs, caressing his arsenal of blowpipes, magnums, blackjacks, flick-knives and tear-gas, 'but if they oppose the gay state we're gonna track 'em down 'n' kill 'em.' He demonstrated a sort of spring-loaded cutlass, saying, 'If you don't take to what a man's telling you you can slit his throat open in mid-sentence with one of these. In mid-word even.' There was a section with his broken-down speedfreak son, who made a pathetic attempt at a dignified exit, not knowing what to do or say, never to be seen again.

Cut to Burroughs's lover-cum-secretary saying that now Bill Junior was dead he felt he had become Bill's son. In the film, Burroughs visits his father's old gardener, who has lost his own son. The ancient black man has a tremendous stammer and becomes very over-excited at the thought of the young master remembering his son's name. Burroughs puts his own good health (*sic*) down to his orgone accumulator. 'Get in the box', he tells a friend, 'you feel it working?' 'That may be the dope', says the friend from inside the box.

Richard Burton was naturally well away in the opposite direction for James Fenton's visit to his baronial front room. He described one film he's been in, *Raid on Rommel,* as having been made from out-takes of an old George Peppard movie. Some poor bloody writer had had to construct a plot around all this redundant footage with Burton in close-up and Peppard in long-shot. Burton looked as if he expected this to come as some kind of surprise to us. It was Fenton's guess that Burton's original drive to become a great classical actor had been all too easily fulfilled in his youth, leaving him with the rest of his life to fill up with trying to enjoy himself, a more elusive target. It had the ring of truth, also of pity. In **Did You See?** (BBC-1) Huw Weldon used the word 'princely' four times in his inability to describe his admiration for the actor. Perhaps 'lordly' was the word he was looking for.

I got a video in specially to tape **Time With Betjeman** (BBC-2), most of which has come under the spell of Sir John's anxious silences, which is OK I suppose. 'You have to understand', said the man who brought the video, 'that your television set is just a monitor now.' So it seems my telly has been cuckolded by the squat intruder. On top of this, I found that while I'd been watching Betjeman it had secretly been recording *Nanny.* They can do things like that. They have different numbers. It now sits winking at me all day.

I was sorry not to have recorded Sir Leslie Patterson's visit to the poet. Sir Les, Aussie cultural attaché, is the creation of Barry Humphries, an old friend of Sir John's. 'Drive around the block', Sir Les was heard telling his taxi, 'I won't be long in here.'

The talk turned to Australia. We saw Sir John examining a Melbourne toilet in the Sixties: 'See the curtains, the brush . . . just like our own . . . but there on the wall . . . a tarantula . . .' I didn't know he had a thing about insects. He has spiders in perspex which frighten his daily. 'You like them because they are lowly, isn't it, Sir John?' prompted his minder. 'Yes.' It's the same reason he fancies Harrow, apparently; because it isn't Eton. 'But you sent your son to Eton.' 'That was snobbery.' □

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THEATRE
Benedict Nightingale

Lady Prospero

The Tempest
SHAKESPEARE *Warehouse*
Berlin, Berlin
JOHN RETALLACK and others *Warehouse*
Lent
MICHAEL WILCOX *Lyric Studio, Hammersmith*
Small Change
PETER GILL *Cottesloe*

Over the years Hamlet has been played by female performers much more often than you might suppose. Moreover, feminist criticism has of late been seeking to prove that, in addition to all his other traits and gifts, capacities and accomplishments, Shakespeare was subliminally a woman. Isn't there, then, both logic and authority behind the Actors Touring Company's decision to cast an actress, Valerie Braddell, in the role most frequently identified with the bard himself, or herself? Possibly, quite possibly. At any rate, I had surprisingly little difficulty adjusting to a transexual Prospero, especially as everyone calls her 'lady', 'mother' and 'mistress' and doesn't pretend (as is usual in the case of Hamlet) that she's really a man with an alto voice and super-efficient shaving tackle. Some things may be out of bounds to Ms Braddell in **The Tempest.** She can't suddenly remove her hat and look like the balding, grizzled Shakespeare on the point of his retirement from the stage, as Gielgud famously did some years ago. But the sage, the magus, the colonial governor, the domineering parent – all these roles are obviously available to her.

In the event, she is more governess than governor, or at least has rather too much of the pince-nez in her manner. When she applauds Ferdinand for having 'strangely stood the test' of her persecution, it sounds a bit like a citation at a school prizegiving; and her grim looks on catching him necking with Miranda, capped by a curt, disapproving 'be more abstemious', irresistibly put me in mind of Miss Buss and Miss Beale, who Cupid's darts did not feel. Yet to sum up Ms Braddell's Prospero as a high-mistress of Cheltenham Ladies' College, exiled by common-room plot to the Isle of Eigg, would ignore her many subtle, striking touches: the residual warmth, the rueful embraces she still offers the beast Caliban, who for once it's possible to believe loved Prospero; her tenderness to Ariel, her sorrow when, in one of the evening's nicer moments, the 'airy spirit' finally soars off to freedom, its carcase crumpling to the floor as it goes.

Not everything about John Retallack's production is so happy. Perhaps it's over-literal of me to wonder why Gonzalo should continue to look like an ad for Moss Bros, immaculate in his morning suit, whether he's just survived hurricane and shipwreck or just tottered, half-dead, from the island jungle; but I can't apologise for finding the textual cuts irksome and the additions, including some hammed-up snippets of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* by Stephano and Trinculo, not funny enough. Also, words are sometimes irritatingly dropped or elided, with the result that (for instance) poor Ferdinand's punishment extends to piling logs, not just 'upon a sore injunction', but actually on top of a tower-block beside Clapham railway station, 'upon a soarin' junction'. Again, the cast is so small that Sebastian and Antonio at one point dash offstage to become a bowler-hatted Stephano and a flat-capped Trinculo, followed by a Gonzalo who must quick-change into Caliban; and Miranda salutes a 'brave new world' of hardly more than one.

And yet, all cavils aside, that serves to emphasise how much has in fact been achieved with spectacularly scarce resources. There's more discipline and flair, and certainly more energy and momentum, in the production as a whole than one sometimes finds at much more pretentious addresses. And three of those selfsame qualities are also to be found in the company's evocation of Berlin or, as it more emphatically puts it, **Berlin, Berlin.** The cast-list includes a young man who has renounced job and relationships to become a full-time reader of the public prints and, eventually, an urban terrorist; his sister from the eastern sector; a mad-eyed puritan who celebrates his release from jail by murdering a porn-dancer; a wrangling couple who run what appears to be a pretty ineffective political cabaret. We're left with an impression of a brazen, jittery town, peopled by the lost and the alienated: which would, I suppose, be an acceptable definition of London, Paris, or any other major European or American city. It is resourcefully staged, and boldly acted; but what's missing is a distinctive sense of place, as well as that dramatic momentum, that narrative thrust which the company successfully injected into what's sometimes described as the most leisurely of Shakespeare's plays.

The same problem, lack of impetus, also afflicts **Lent,** especially in its first half, which is pretty cumbersome when it comes to establishing the fraught and bitter relationships inside the less-than-wholesome prep school where it's set. The aim, I think, is partly to communicate the puzzlement and pain of the small boy through whose eyes this adult turmoil is seen, partly to build a Chekhovian picture of a peculiarly English backwater; and, though a tendency to simplify character means that the author doesn't entirely succeed in doing either, the piece has developed an authentically autobiographical feel and fascination by its end – as, indeed, has the most recently-staged of Peter Gill's trips back to his childhood roots in Cardiff.

Small Change is less starkly poetic than *Kick for Touch;* but it, too, reduces its world to a few chairs and its people to the sort of gut-twisting memories one can never hope to rediscover, escape, or even decipher. □

ART
John Spurling

Never Land

Peter Blake and **James Barry**
Tate
Indian Drawing and **Francis Davison**
Hayward
Alive To It All
Serpentine
The Cimabue Crucifix
RA

Peter Blake claims to be a better painter than Hockney and he may be right. His trouble, though, is not lack of skill, but, like Hockney, lack of subject-matter. Both artists in their youth got a lot of mileage out of their newly-awakened sense of themselves, their heroes, enthusiasms and pet obsessions – in Blake's case these included pop-stars, pin-ups, wrestlers, postcards, mementoes of childhood – but, perhaps because the wicked fairy Success laid its finger on them so early, neither has been able to convert to any mature interest in a more objective world. They remain a pair of Peter Pans, not naively so, but helplessly aware that life in the Never Land is not half the adventure it seemed and that its only content is style.

The first painting in Blake's retrospective is a staring, hungry-looking self-portrait done at the age of 17 and reminiscent of Stanley Spencer's at the age of 23. Spencer went on to discover religion – or at least the Christian story and its iconography – as a way of binding together his private obsessions, of objectifying and giving meaning to the otherwise trivial and anecdotal. In 1969, at the age of 37, Blake moved to the country and later became a founder-member of the Brotherhood of Ruralists, with, one suspects, the hope of discovering his own version of Spencer's remedy. But fairies were not it. They helped Blake dig a little deeper into the erotic, voyeuristic compartment of his youthful luggage which he had previously treated only as a source for simple innuendoes of the seaside postcard variety, but they opened no coherent world. At the end of the Ruralist period Blake was back more or less where he started, with his bric-a-brac, his souvenirs, his jokey references to other people's art and his perpetual and understandable difficulty over getting to grips with large paintings. The unrealised works are there in the last room of this very large collection of odds and ends, shadowy intimations of the sort of things a lost boy with a skill for painting would like to do if only he could decide what.

Next door to Peter Blake's retrospective is James Barry's. Born in Cork in 1741, Barry was taken up and supported through five years of study on the Continent by Edmund Burke, became professor of painting at the RA in 1782, was expelled in 1799 for making

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public accusations against his fellow academicians, and died, in a state of poverty and paranoia, in 1806. He made fine portraits of Burke and Dr Johnson, among others, and several brilliant self-portraits, but he wished to be a history painter in the grand manner of the Renaissance giants and misjudged both his own capacity and the period he lived in. It was a time when the current of Romanticism was just beginning to cross that of neo-classicism and although a horror-specialist like Fuseli or an imaginative genius like the other Blake could make the combination serve their purposes, it was fatal to Barry. His high tragedy dissolves into melodrama, his heroics into stagey posturings, his pathos into bathos. He can do something with close-ups, where the detail fills the picture space and the frame, cutting across the composition at odd angles, forces his forms into powerful contrary rhythms, but his handling of groups of complete figures in a large horizontal format is like nothing so much as old-fashioned opera production, static, stilted and visually soporific.

William L. Pressly, who has selected and catalogued this show, draws attention to the many layers of meaning in these paintings – Barry was a political radical and an Irish nationalist as well as a passionate believer in the prime importance of art – but none of them can begin to work when the basic story to which they are attached – Lear and Cordelia, Pandora, Ulysses and Polyphemus – verges on the ludicrous.

The best things in the exhibition, apart from the portraits, are some illustrations to *Paradise Lost* (Dr Pressly suggests that Barry as rebel and artist-hero identified with Satan) and a group of drawings of male and female nudes. There is also one large painting which, though it is as awkwardly composed as the rest, has a strange intensity missing elsewhere. It shows the bedroom scene from Cymbeline. Imogen lies half curled up and raised on a pillow with the sheet clinging to her lower half and one breast exposed, while Iachimo, in Roman costume, one muscular leg thrown forward out of the chest in which he has been hiding, a pencil and paper in his left hand, stares lustfully at her in demonic profile. He looks almost like a heightened self-portrait and the room with its antique objects and dark drapes more like an artist's studio than a lady's chamber; at any rate it is a memorable study of erotic frustration which makes one think again about the reasons for Barry's failure as a history painter.

Cordelia's corpse at the centre of the scene from *Lear* is distinctly provocative, as Gillray noticed when he caricatured the picture with Cordelia naked; the central figure in *The Birth of Pandora* is actually naked and is thrown back in the same sexually receptive manner as both Imogen and Cordelia, the head like theirs twisted towards one shoulder. Perhaps, after all, it is a failure less of technique than of interest in his other characters and themes that spoils these pictures. Did Barry's overt ambition to be a latterday Michelangelo conceal or decline into a keener urge to be a premature Ingres?

Upstairs at the Hayward are two separate shows, though it's doubtful whether anyone who has been round the large landscape show downstairs will have the energy to give them the attention they deserve. The exquisite Indian drawings of elephants, princes, ladies and tiger-hunts, assembled by Howard Hodgkin, require close and detailed study; the large abstracts made by Francis Davison out of torn and crumpled pieces of coloured paper have the immediate effect of heraldic banners, but they are subtle too and, considering the simplicity of their means, extraordinarily varied. There are more Davison torn-outs – plus Klees, Mirós, Hiltons, Calders, a Pollock and sundry lesser fry – in the Arts Council's cheerful travelling show of childlike art by adults now at the Serpentine.

Following its success with the horse from San Marco, Olivetti is touring the great Cimabue Crucifix from Santa Croce in Florence round some of the world's major art-centres. The Crucifix was caught in the terrible flood of 1966 and is now ruined; but it remains a landmark in the development of early Renaissance art, though it has become, alas, more a freak and a monument to a natural disaster than an object for contemplation, whether sacred or aesthetic. It is on show at the RA until Easter Monday and will be open on both Good Friday and Easter Day. □

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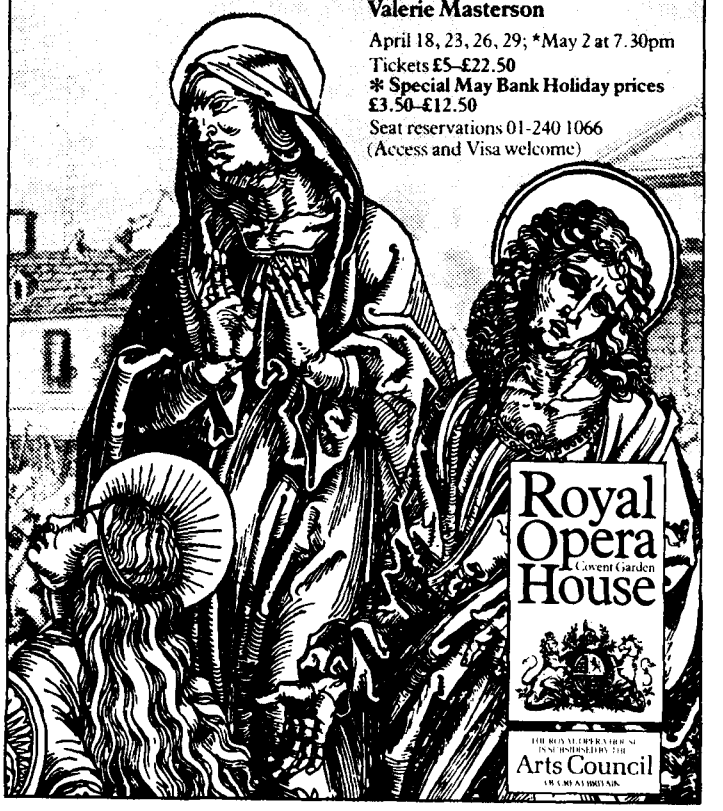
Royal Opera House Covent Garden
Arts Council

Multi Culture Book Fair Arts Festival
28-30 March
at the
Commonwealth Institute
Kensington High Street
London W8
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For further details:
Arts Festival
National Association for Asian Youth
01-574 1325
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FILMS
John Coleman

Smiley's people

The Missionary (15)
Classic, Haymarket; ABC, Fulham Road
Kuhle Wampe (PG)
Academy One
Jean-Pierre Melville: In Context
NFT, 5-31 March
Enigma (15)
Warner; Studio; ABCs, Bayswater, Fulham and Edgware Roads; London release

Rifling an inspired thesaurus of smiles, Michael Palin – comedian extraordinary – is always his own men. There is the smile gosh-golly or bashful, the smile steely and mock-heroic, the smile hucksterish, smile soulful, smile moronic; but, irradiating all, there is that breaking smile of sheer merriment in which the eyes gleefully partake. When this face is put forward, we are convinced for its duration that the world is no bad old place after all. Or, rather, was; for Palin seems happiest, most in his humour and best able to communicate it when tripping himself up in the past, down memory lane. Those TV *Ripping Yarns*, where the antique values of *Boy's Own Paper* and *Chums* took an ambivalent ribbing, caught him flying magnificent private kites, soaring solo and free from the beloved coils of the Python. And **The Missionary**, with Palin as writer, joint producer and star, finds him taking the process a stage further. As Charles Fortescue, nice vicar summoned back to England and an epistolary fiancée after ten years of keeping a straight bat among African villagers, he plays equally straight throughout much of the rich and zany comedy that ensues.

What's more, the town and country landscapes of 1906, the overfurnished rooms and palatial halls (and even some opening sequences shot in Kenya) are visually stunning – director Richard Loncraine has worked with the fine Australian lighting cameraman Peter Hannan before – as were the locations and costumes in *Jabberwocky* and *Time Bandits*, for instance; this lesson, that comedy has everything to gain from a nostalgic-realistic context, from jettisoning the old cardboard-and-cut-out makeshifts, has been well and truly learnt. Fortescue, baggage bursting with African phallic carvings, is no sooner reunited with his English rose bride-to-be (Phoebe Nicholls) than Denholm Elliott's sports-mad bishop is urging him to set up a C of E Mission to Fallen Women in the East End. Maggie Smith's wonderfully wicked and stylish Lady Ames, wed to the wealthiest bigot in Britain (Trevor Howard), funds him at a price: his body. The mission flourishes, thanks – as a discreet voice over has it – to the gentle, if-you-can't-convert-'em-join-'em Fortescue's 'unique blend of moral leadership and personal availability'. The bishop and a jealous Lady Ames are to bring a halt to this overzealous venture, and a near-fatality, before a thoroughly pagan and jolly ending.

If it doesn't quite hang together, *The Missionary* whips so genially hither and yon around its glances at late-Victorian hypocrisies and sheer bloodiness, is so unfashionably well written (you can read it, at slightly fuller length: Methuen £6.95, worth every penny), that one forgives it the hopes faintly raised and dashed of a work as satisfyingly complete as that elegant, literate masterpiece, *Kind Hearts and Coronets*. Palm charms so effortlessly as the stumbling but steadfast hero that we even nod in agreement when Lady Ames delivers a line fraught with danger: 'That's the trouble with you, Charles, far too decent . . .' And there is always that thick little fiancée, with her elaborate filing system for Charles's letters and concern for the bruised knees of his fallen women; Lord Ames asking for the spelling of 'disembowelment' as he writes to *The Times*; and, as a riotous amnesiac, Michael Hordern's dishevelled butler losing his way in the Ames country seat with majestic consistency. These are strokes of comic genius.

It seems singularly right that a freshened-up version of the 1932 German classic, **Kuhle Wampe**, directed by Slatan Dudow from a script by Bertolt Brecht and Ernst Ottwald, should get its first public showing at the Academy, since the late George Hoellering co-produced this fascinating (and swiftly banned) piece of agit-prop about love, mass unemployment and socialism in the Weimar Republic. A hopeless youngster leaps from a window; his sister gets pregnant and her lover (Ernst Busch, who can also be heard singing the harsh ballads) reluctantly agrees to marry her; he sees the light at the tent settlement of Kuhle Wampe outside Berlin, during a sports festival with a political cabaret, in the cut-and-thrust of heated argument among passengers in a crowded train. Dudow was over-fond of effects that now look self-admiring (a montage of bicycles, spinning wheels, from many angles; a nudging close-up of a watch), but the thrust and flavour of the film still impress with their caustic freshness: this is more than a collector's item.

Jean-Pierre Melville (1917-1973) was not only a precursor of that French *nouvelle vague*. The best of his eclectic output towers above many of its more vaunted later ripples: *Le Silence de la mer, Les Enfants terribles, Bob le flambeur* (extraordinary), *Léon Morin, prêtre* (one of Belmondo's greatest performances), *Le Doulos* – one could extend the list; and the NFT mercifully does, as well as setting Melville's saturnine, uncompromising yet uniquely sensitive and atmospheric excursions into France under the Occupation and the underworld of France within a framework of other people's movies felt by Chris Peachment (who has organised the provocative season) to shed light on influences, and back on to the fiercely independent Melville himself. Very much to be sampled.

As a thriller that signally fails to raise more than the odd giggle or raised eyebrow, Jeannot Szwarc's **Enigma** sends Martin Sheen as an East German agent for the US to steal a vital bit of scrambler equipment. KGB men keep howling, 'I want this whole area sectioned off', unavailingly. Against my normal practice, may I rather recommend (sight unseen) Joan Harvey's **America – From Hitler to M-X**, an anti-war documentary currently at the Ria, Dalston? □

FIRST PERSON

Patricia Craig

Fancy dress

UP UNTIL A FEW YEARS AGO, Sandy Row in Belfast was the site of a conspicuous survival from the past – an old-clothes shop called Maggie Moore's. This shop had been notorious in its day. In the '20s and '30s, as far afield as Co Antrim or Co Armagh, the uncharitable were apt to criticise their neighbours' style of dressing by inferring that they shopped at Maggie Moore's. The shop was a byword for cheapness and raggedness.

So it remained for the whole of its existence. Its last owner, who inherited it from an aunt (possibly the original Maggie Moore), saw no reason to shift the bulk of her stock from the rails where she found it hanging. 40 or 50 years later, a lot of it was still hanging – evocatively shrouded in dust and mould. All the same, the amount of stuff that could be salvaged from among its unsavoury heaps made the shop an irresistible hunting-ground for the old-clothes fanatic.

One of the tricks was to catch new arrivals before the moths and the rot got at them. When I first visited Maggie Moore's in 1970 or thereabouts, I came away with six printed chiffon dresses, which had somehow survived. This triumph was never repeated, but, in the hope that it might be, I began to haunt the place. Elizabeth Bowen, in a *New Statesman* review of 1937, remarked that a fanciful dresser 'is relentlessly driven through her London shopping by the exactions of her particular whim'. I know what she meant. Each time I visited Belfast I was relentlessly driven to Maggie Moore's in Sandy Row.

Nearly everything I found there was worn or nibbled around the edges, but not to be despised on that account. Among my possessions is an imitation Schiaparelli coat, air-force blue apart from the shoulders and upper arms which have faded to an endearing grey. I also own a discoloured mackintosh with a delightful lining and a spotted silk dress with no moth holes to speak of.

To reach the shop, it was necessary to

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stroll nonchalantly along Sandy Row and dodge in through the narrow doorway when no one was looking. To be seen sidling into Maggie Moore's could only mean that the cheapest modern dress shop was beyond you. Either that, or you were touched in the head.

You entered into a murky room with a dangerously uneven stone floor. The proprietor, a charming and voluble old lady when I knew her, had the habit of thrift: the light was switched on only when a genuine customer, or what looked like one, appeared in the doorway. (The odd tramp, wandering in in search of an overcoat or a sound pair of shoes, didn't rate such encouraging treatment.)

Separate bundles of very old bras, toddlers' party frocks, and outsize knickers hung from the ceiling. The part of the shop directly in front of the tiny window was given over to second-hand socks. Shoes stacked on the floor behind the clothes-rails were encased in cobwebs as thick as crochet-work. Favoured customers, before they left, were given a wet towel to wipe the grime off their hands.

For whom did the business cater? The would-be smart in search of recent cast-offs from a better-class district such as the Malone Road; the outrageously impoverished; those with an uncontrollable fancy for the working clothes of bygone doffers; and me.

It's true that I'd been preceded there by several generations of enlightened art students. In spite of this, the shop's owner never really learnt to distinguish between the downy and the down-at-heel. I appreciated the effort she made to avoid giving me the impression that she thought there was anything odd in my taste of dress. Once or twice, I thought her feelings were going to get the better of her – as she extolled the quality of some exceptionally eccentric article. It says much for her self-control that they didn't.

All this is a far cry from Antiquarius, Lunn Antiques and so forth; yet nothing but a few layers of dirt separated the better M. Moore offering from the type of garment you find carefully protected by a polythene cover and classed as 'genuine art silk 1930s *art nouveau*' or something of the sort. At the present time, almost anything old is highly rated, irrespective of whether or not it was up to much in the first place; while the authentic old clothes dealer, like M. Moore, could allow the rarest examples of *haute couture* to disingegrate without a qualm.

Dress, of course, is a complex subject, as Elizabeth Bowen also noted. What's happened in this particular area, over the last 20 years or so, marks a departure from the usual process whereby a style went out of fashion, became ugly and laughable, and eventually acquired a measure of historic charm. Now, the clothes of the past can exert a fascination quite as potent as the lure of the new. Even the styles of the recent past have their adherents – those susceptible to *what you might call nostalgie de la boutique*. Belfast now has a second-hand clothes shop of unimpeachable orderliness; and Maggie Moore's has closed for the last time. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2760 **Set by C. Fever**

After clerihews (see below), let's have some brisk limericks about people from places in Italy, Spain, Russia or Yugoslavia. By 18 March.

No 2757 **Set by D. H. Cudmore**

Clerihews on the titles *or* first lines of famous poems.

Report **By Toby Jugge**

Unimprovable. Four quid a shot.

Abou ben Adhem
Increased his tribe with any passing madam
But was not as randy as
Ozymandias.

KEN CLAYBOURNE

'Dover Beach'
Doesn't exactly preach.
It just says: 'I've got this gel;
The rest of you can go to hell.'

COLIN FALCK

April is the cruellest month, breeding
A lot of problems for the person who has to do the weeding.
In comparison, May
Is OK.

GEORGE SIMMERS

'Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern
Abbey on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye
During a Tour, 13 July, 1798'
Illustrate
That a title
Isn't vital.

BILL GREENWELL

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Well, I may,
Since nothing could be rummer
Than our summer.

MAUD GRACECHURCH

Drink to me only with thine eyes.
This would be wise
Since, in general, gin
Leads on to sin.

When I was one and twenty
I had plenty
And even had
A Shropshire lad.

HARRISON EVERARD

O that this too too solid flesh would melt
And I become more svelte
Instead of being one of those awful sights
In tights.

ROBIN CHASE

The naked earth is warm with spring:
'Twill have its fling.
But later, when the blustering winter rants on,
'Twill put its pants on.

MOYRA BLYTH

'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'
Tests a reader's stamina.
It proves in verse
That more means worse.

D. A. PRINCE

'Paradise Lost'
Itemises the cost
Of making a mistake
With a snake.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

Sohrab and Rustum
Defied the custom –
It was the dad
Who slew his lad.

O. BANFIELD

'Little Gidding',
Although forbidding,
Compares
Favourably with Pam Ayres.

NICHOLAS MURRAY

'Il Penseroso'
May be only so-so,
But 'To Cyriack Skinner'
Is an absolute dog's dinner.

JOHN SWEETMAN

'Gunga Din'
Made sahibs cry in their gin.
Now stones are hurled
If you recite it in the Third World.

PETER VEALE

Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit
Nobody thinks – or cares a hoot.
Nor does anyone much believe
In Adam, the Serpent, or Eve.

GAVIN EWART

'Ode on a Grecian Urn'
I spurn.
I don't get the hots
For graffiti on pots.

GERRY HAMILL

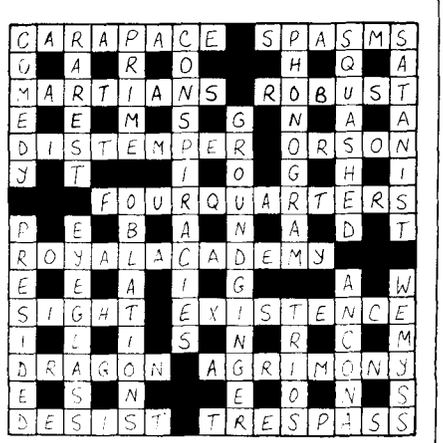
There is a garden in her face –
In which case
She, I suppose, may
Blow her nosegay.

JOYCE JOHNSON

The Pobble who has no toes
Goes
Through the whole of his life without
Gout.

PETER ALEXANDER

Solution to Crossword 1391



Prizewinners to 1391

J. Bharier (Bewdley)
D. L. L. Clarke (Oxford)
Mrs M. B. Mollison (Edinburgh)

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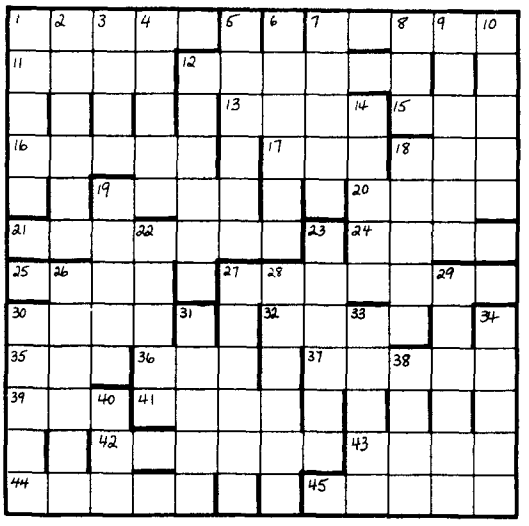
Salamanca 66

'Six of One, Half-a-dozen of the Other'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 66, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 28 March.



Normal clues consist of three types – i) whose answers are normal; ii) whose answers are puns loosely modelled on a famous couple; and iii) whose answers in part contain a letter or letters that must be translated by the corresponding letter(s) of the partners indicated by ii (1 × 2 = letters of answer appearing in first substituted by those corresponding in second, etc.). One abbr., one old form, one foreign name do not appear in Chambers.

Name_____

Address_____

i)

2 Grunt order without energy – it *can't* be – – – – – – ! (6)
3 In river this heads to catch reckless ones crossing? (4)
4 Foreign girl or English schoolgirl (adult) (5)
6 Dresses seen when Sun rises and shines? (6)
9 What envelopes foetus when very much held up (6)
11 'Ideous sight, say, Mac has as casual (4)
13 Beast no longer found in our usual surround (4)
15 Shown by one getting most heated (3)
17 T'get energy one first – – – ? (3)
18Ac. One of leaders among motor-scooterists outfitted dapperly (3)
21 Wrest so wildly in them? (7)
22 Narrow Hymenoptera types – sharp stings in their tails (5)
26 Old pupil, Irish in look, sly (6)
28 Stock value in heart of a community? Possibly (6)
33 Rhea – what two letters make Greek v? (5)
36 Chiefs of Police to which one grasses (3)
37 I head lamas without shame in order (5)
38 Mac's love meeting with resistance? That's more dear to him (4)
40 We meet with some old relative (3)
42 Bright-red shade – mother's wearing one inside (6)
43 Accomplish all right with fist (4)
44 Any coming out with 'F–!' should be made to dry up (5)

ii)

1Ac. 30Ac. Disorder that's nasty and filthy? (5, 4)
18D. 7D. Which speaks openly of wealth? (5, 5)
27Ac. 1D. Elk full of derision? (7, 5)
27D. 12Ac. Person who's malicious and gloomy? (6, 6)
30D. 7Ac. – – · –·– · –·– · ·–? (5, 5)
31. 19D. Inclined to be vacant and watery? (5, 5)
32. 12D. A whole lot of cutters? (4, 6)
34. 5. White dessert? (5, 6)
45. 20. Dark, boggy ground? (5, 4)

iii) 1 × 2

8 What's in the granary elevator (3)
19Ac. Girls who serve mass, say, that's unruly (4)
24 Edible tubers round about on topsoil (4)
25 It's making one feel uncomfortable, repeated scratching? (4)
35 The old time at the same time (3)
41 District under jurisdiction that's steep, say (4)

2 × 1

10 Extreme edges of irritated lids? Eyes have them (5)
14 I'm in disciple group (5)
16 The strength of special wines (5)
23 Wreath one's made carelessly (6)
29 Why a oner's fabricated (6)
39 Frog's shout 'One ought to have crown on head!' (3)

Solution to Salamanca 65

Prizewinners to Salamanca 65

J. E. Green (Hertford)
R. Palmer (Broadbottom)
H. D. Soutar (Salisbury)

Re: S64. Congrats to Dr Aronson for finding and following the acrostic.

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ADAPTABLE PERSON, around 52-62, sought to share running attractive small bookshop, West Kent. Investment unnecessary. Flat available. Box 5584.

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AUTHORS INVITED submit MSS all types (including poems) for book publication. Reasonable terms. Stockwell Ltd, Ilfracombe, Devon (est. 1898).

(CONSCIOUSLY) JEWISH MAN (30), *warm, sensitive,* intelligent, seeks similar, interesting lady. Interests – politics (very platonic Trot), psychoanalysis, music. Please send small photo. Box 5588.

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DIVORCED FEMALE, late fifties, seeks holiday companionship. Interests: cycling, walking, travelling, theatre. Box 5597.

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EMPATHY: a social group for courteous, non-apathetic people, 30-40. London only. Informative letter and s.a.e. for details. Box 5582.

EXPERIENCED, CARING PSYCHOTHERAPISTS. 01-794 6810, 01-586 4109, 01-883 5418.

FEMALE, 30, London area, would like to meet similarly tall, attractive, intelligent, considerate, caring male, with wide interests. Box 5592.

HANDSOME, PROFESSIONAL, bachelor (38), finally convinced material success gives limited satisfaction, seeks slim, bright, beautiful woman, to share some hopefully lasting happiness. Small photo appreciated. Box 5602.

HYPNOSIS to help stop smoking, nailbiting & alleviate migraine, tension & insomnia. Find self confidence & discover creative potential. Free consultation. Near Baker Street. 01-262 7104.

INDEPENDENCE PALLS. Divorcee, 34, loves theatre, food, children, music, challenge. Dislikes pretention, drifting, injustice, selfishness. "Funny, infuriating, affectionate, wilful" friend? (south preferred, not London). Box 5523.

ISOLATED FEMALE, 33, seeks wealthy, intelligent Robert Redford lookalike. Alternatively anyone for mutual support, social outings. Glasgow area. Box 5599.

ISOLATED HOMOSEXUAL women read Sequel Magazine. Reply: B/M Sequel, London WC1N 3XX.

LECTURER (male, 49), would like to meet an intelligent, healthy woman to share concern for peace and justice and grow in love and creativity. Box 5601.

LONELY? Join us at Theobalds (cure assured?!). See ad below.

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Good food and company. Gracious house and grounds. 200 subjects (wine-making, crafts, music, painting, etc.) S.A.E. full brochure: ***THEOBALDS, Waltham Cross EN7 5HW. Tel: Waltham Cross 27355*** (Answerphone after hours 27369) Please quote 'New Statesman'.

LONELY? Why not join London's Friendliest Singles Club for making new friends. City Circle. 01-388 9273 (9 a.m.-6 p.m.).

MALE, 45, tall, slim, own home, car, central London, *seeks sincere female. Box* 5585.

PIANO TUNER, reliable, North London only unless repairs needed. Denys Parsons MSc, 01-340 4695.

PROFESSIONAL South African, Indian female, seeks tallish gentleman friend, 40s. Small photo appreciated. Box 5581.

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The New Statesman congratulates and thanks
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for the excellent food and efficient friendly service at its "housewarming" party last week
Tel. 01-692 1485
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TALL MAN, 33, elegant, intelligent, affluent, seeks sexy, older woman. Box 5558.

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Appointments

Police Committee Support Unit

Hackney Council has established a Police Committee to direct the authority's interest in borough policing and related matters.

The Council is in the process of setting up a small support unit to work to the Police Committee. The unit will concern itself with all aspects of policing in Hackney, including monitoring and developing policies, complaints against the police and developing a victim support scheme.

Policing Research Assistants (2)

(£11,205-£11,697 p.a. inc.) Ref: AG 227/NST

You will work under the direction of the recently appointed Head of the Support Unit. You will undertake research and investigative work on policing issues and also be involved in developing links with community groups in the borough.

You should have investigative and research skills and experience in living or working in a multi-racial city environment. Knowledge of police procedures and practice and an ability to work with community groups would be an advantage.

Administrative Assistant

(£7,458-£8,211 p.a. inc.) Ref: AG 228/NST

You will work under the direction of the recently appointed Head of the Support Unit, and be involved in the development and administration of the Unit's office systems. In particular, you will be responsible for dealing with the collection, storage and retrieval of information coming into the Unit.

You should be experienced in the handling of information and an interest in policing and civil liberties issues would be an advantage.

Job sharing facilities are available.

Application forms are available from John Penney, Head of Personnel Services, Town Hall, Mare Street, E8 1EA, or telephone 01-986 7539 (24-hour answering service) quoting reference.
Closing date: 18 March, 1983.

We would positively welcome applications from black people, disabled people and women.

Hackney — a radical, socialist Borough

The *Bell* Educational Trust

requires

TWO SECRETARIES/SECRETARIAL TRAINERS

to work as members of an English team at two language training centres in **THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.** One will be required from 15-5-83, the other from 15-10-83. Emoluments £5,000 pa paid in UK; adequate living allowance payable in Yuan; £500 settlement allowance. Free accommodation. One return airfare. Min. qualifications: five years' experience, advanced secretarial qualifications, degree preferable.

Please reply with full CV, the names of two referees and a photograph to **Mr Lewis Kerr, The Bell Educational Trust, Willow House, Willow Lane, Norwich NR2 1EU.**

MORE HOUSE: Catholic Hostel for University Students. Required for September 1983, **RESIDENT WARDEN.** Applicants should be 35-55, conversant with university milieu and have practical experience. Salary approx. £5,000 p.a. plus board and lodging. Apply by 19 March with c.v. and names of two referees to the Provincial, More House, 53 Cromwell Road, London SW7 2EH.

OV SELECTION CATERS for the more mature person as well as graduates and 'A' level students with typing and office skills. Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy.) Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London, SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

LISTINGS

THURS 3 MAR

BRISTOL 'Victory to the Irish People' 7.30pm, The Swan, Stokes Croft. Org Bristol Troops Out Movement, c/o 86 St Peter's Rise, Headley Park, Bristol BS13 7NF.

LONDON WC1 Exhibition of Chilean Solidarity and Polish Solidarity posters, 9.15-5.15 weekdays for two weeks. Congress House, Great Russell Street (Tottenham Court Road tube). Org TUC. **01-636 4030.**

LONDON SE16 CND and NATO. Spkr Pat Arrowsmith. 8pm, Bermondsey District Library Hall, Small Hall, Spa Road. Org Bermondsey CND. **01-231 3505.**

FRI 4 MAR

RHYL 'War Plan UK' Spkr Duncan Campbell. 7.30pm, Marina Hotel. Org Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (Welsh Language Society), c/o 109 Ffordd Gallt Melyd, Prestatyn, Clwyd LL19 8LU.

LONDON NW1 'Positive Action for Women'. 7.30pm, Camden Town Hall. Spkrs R. Lister, F. Morrell, S. Parsons, A. Pettifor. Org Greater London Regional Conference, Fabian Society Fringe Meetings. Details **01-222 8877.**

LONDON NW1 'Health of Old People and Research in Modern Medicine'. Spkr Dr R. W. Fowler. 7.15pm, Working Men's College, Crowndale Road (Nr Mornington Crescent tube). **01-387 2037.**

LONDON WC1 Critique Conference. Marx After Stalin. 7.30pm, University of London Union (ULU), Malet Street. Details from Critique **041-339 5267.**

LONDON WC2 'Allaghi in Greece: A Conference on the Policy of Radical Change'. 2.30-9pm, New Theatre, LSE, Houghton Street. Org Union of Greek University Teachers and Research Staff in Western Europe (UGUTRSWE). Details **01-928 8989 ex. 2126.**

SAT 5 MAR

LONDON WC1 Critique Conference. Marx After Stalin. 10am-5.15pm. ULU, Malet Street. Details from Critique **041-339 5267.**

LONDON WC2 'Allaghi in Greece: A Conference on the Policy of Radical Change'. 10am-9pm. Conference Hall A45, LSE, Houghton Street. Org UGUTRSWE. Details **01-928 8989 ex. 2126.**

EDINBURGH Day school on the Crisis in Central America. 10am-4pm, The Pleaseance. Org Edinburgh Latin American Solidarity Campaign.

LEICESTER 'Poverty Pay: low wages in the 1980s' conference. 11am-5.30pm, Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle. Org WEA Leicester Branch in association with University of Leicester Dept. of Adult Education and CPAG. Contact **Leicester 59740.**

GLASGOW 'Scottish Education in the Year 2000' conference. 10am-4.30pm, Boyd Orr Building, University of Glasgow, University Avenue. Org University of Glasgow, Dept. Adult & Continuing Education. **041-339 8855 ex. 7535.**

NOTTINGHAM 'Women's Festival' Rally. 10.30am. Spkrs Jo Richardson, Ruth Lister, Patricia Hewitt, Viv Bell, etc. Market Square with march to Albert Hall Institute. Lunch available.

OXFORD 'Re-reading Shakespeare' 10am-6pm, St Cross Building. Adm £1.50; lunch and creche available. Org Oxford English Limited Committee.

MANCHESTER Energy Conference: CHP/District heating, acid rain, conservation, small-scale and renewables. 10am-6pm. County Hall, Piccadilly. C/o Priestnall Road, Stockport SK4 3HW.

LONDON N8 Training session in the techniques of non-violent direct action. 11am-6pm. Rokesley Junior School, Rokesley Avenue. Tea and coffee provided but participants should bring food to share. Creche available. Org Hornsey CND. Details **01-348 3788 or 01-444 9579.**

LONDON N8 Social. 7-11pm, The Maynard, Park Road. Org Hornsey CND. Details **01-340 9683.**

WEMBLEY Second International Conference on Active Birth. 9.30am-6pm. Wembley Conference Centre. Org Active Birth Movement, 32 Cholmeley Crescent, London N6 5JR. **01-348 1284.**

LONDON EC1 'Science in Socialism Conference/Celebration/Critique'. 10am-4pm. Marx House, Clerkenwell Green. Adm £3.50 (£1.50 unwaged) at door. Details Science & Technology Committee, 16 St John Street.

SUN 6 MAR

CHESHIRE 5 mile Peace Chain from Capenhurst to Neston. Report to Capenhurst or Marconi to be positioned from 10.30am. 'Link' from 12-1pm, marching back from Marconi at 1pm. Rally and national spkrs (including Frank Allaun MP) 3pm at Capenhurst. Org Campaign for a Nuclear Free Cheshire and Merseyside CND Groups.

LONDON NW1 'Decentralising Local Government'. 12.45, Camden Town Hall. Greater London Regional Conference, Fabian Society Fringe Meeting. Details **01-222 8877.**

LONDON NW1 Labour Solidarity Campaign Fringe Meeting. Lunchtime, Great Northern Hotel, Kings Cross. Spkrs Richard May and Roy Hattersley. Details **01-722 9253.**

LONDON WC1 'Allaghi in Greece: A Conference on the Policy of Radical Change'. 10.30am-4pm. 'The Place', 17 Duke's Road. Org UGUTRSWE. Details **01-928 8989 ex. 2126.**

MON 7 MAR

NOTTINGHAM 'Nuclear Weapons — Your Chance to Question'. Public debate between Mgr Bruce Kent (CND) and Michael Brotherton, MP for Louth (Tory). 7.30pm, Rainbow Rooms, Broad Street. Org Nottingham CND, c/o 15 Goosegate.

LONDON W1 'Outcast London: The Making of a Myth'. Spkr Raphael Samuel. 7.30pm, Black Horse pub, Rathbone Place. Org History Workshop Journal, c/o 59 Casimir Road, London E5.

TUES 8 MAR

LONDON SW6 Welfare Rights Meeting. Spkrs Joan Lestor MP and Ruth Lister, Child Poverty Action Group. 8pm, St Thomas's Church Club, Kelvedon Road. Org Fulham Labour Party. Details **01-736 3045.**

WED 9 MAR

LONDON W1 'The Peace Movement in East Germany'. Spkr John Sandford. 7pm, Grafton Arms pub, 72 Grafton Way. Org London END Group. Details **01-272 1236.**

THURS 10 MAR

LONDON N1 'What Marx really meant'. Public meeting. 8pm, Prince Albert pub, Wharfdale Road, Kings Cross. Adm free. Org Socialist Party of Great Britain. Details **01-622 3811.**

FORTHCOMING

11-13 MAR Malvern, Worcs. The Ecology Party's special election conference at the Winter Gardens, Grange Road. Details **01-735 2485.**

11 MAR Birmingham. The Tory Attack on Youth: Tebbit's plans for training on the dole. 7.30pm, Labour Club, 14-16 Bristol Street. Org West Midlands ILP. Details **0785-43895.**

12 MAR London W1. 'Women and Books' — Women in Libraries' third annual conference. Polytechnic of Central London, 115 New Cavendish Street. Details **01-636 2383.**

12 MAR Bradford. March against cruise and Trident. Details **Bradford 493317.**

14 MAR London SW19. Richard Balfe MEP speaks against the EEC. 8pm, William Morris Hall, 267 Wimbledon Broadway. Org Wimbledon CLP.

21 MAR London NW1. Policies for Victory. Tony Benn, Robin Cook, Harriet Harman, Joan Ruddock. 7.30pm, Camden Town Hall. Adm £1. Org Labour Co-ordinating Committee. Details **01-439 3749.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE. EC1. 01-278 8916 (5 lines). CC group sales 01-379 6061. ***NEW SADLER'S WELLS OPERA*** 4 Mar. at 7.30 **Count of Luxembourg,** 5 Mar. at 2.30 & 7.30 **Countess Maritza.** From 8 Mar. eves 7.30 **BALLET RAMBERT.** See Daily Press for Prog. details.
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Meetings

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THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sunday 6 March 8 p.m. 'Soul Initiation'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

WRITERS DAY – a few tickets left! At Purcell Room, Festival Hall. 10.30 a.m., Saturday 19 March. Speakers: D. M. Thomas and Jerzy Kosinski. Awards presented by the Minister for the Arts. Discussion. Information and tickets (£5.50 lectures, £14 with lunch) from PEN, 7 Dilke Street, London SW3. Tel: 01-352 9549.

Seminar

HISTORY WORKSHOP: London Seminar. Raphael Samuel speaks on 'Outcast London: The Making of a Myth' at the Black Horse Pub, Rathbone Place, W1 at 7.30 p.m. Monday 7 March. Admission free.

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